

FRONT: THE NEW AGE OF GUERRILLA MARKETING • 7 / MUSIC: ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN • 23

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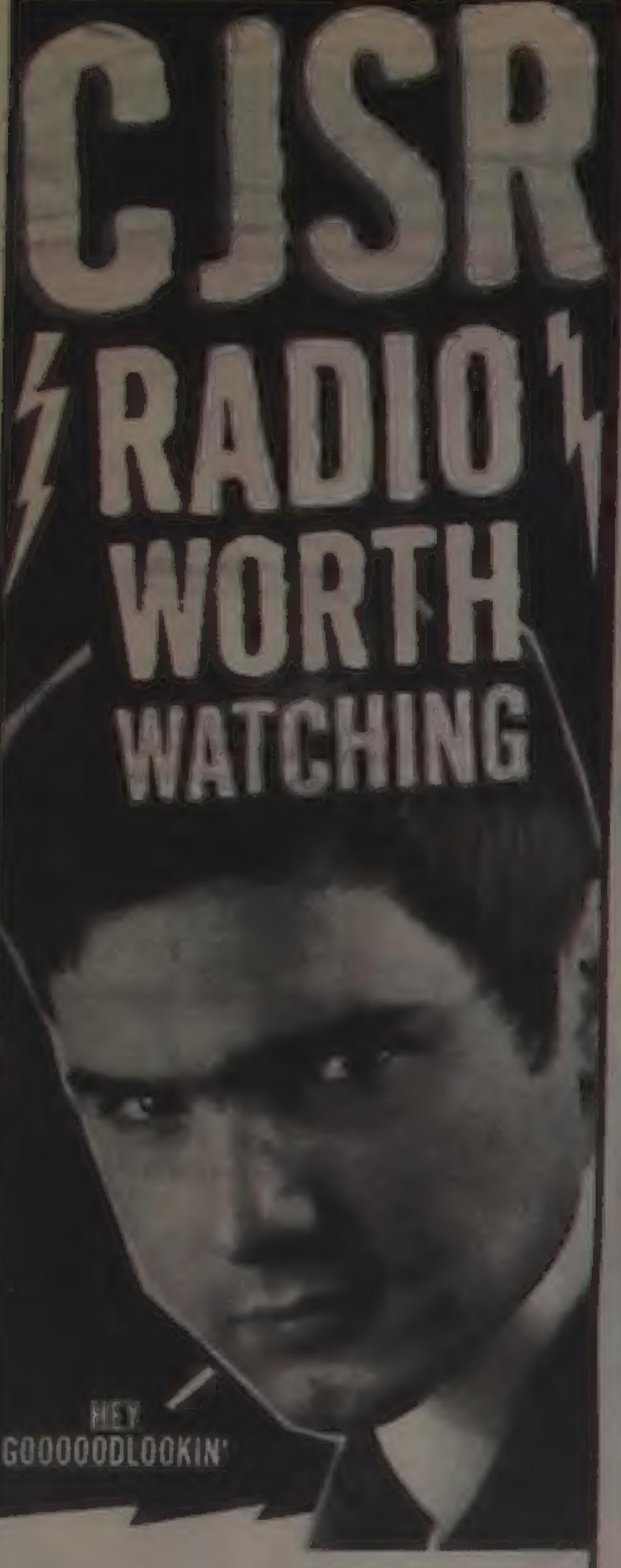
VUEWEEKLY



FREE
No. 463 / MAR. 3 - MAR. 9, 2005
[HTTP://WWW.VUEWEEKLY.COM](http://www.vueweekly.com)

FOOL FOR LOVE

Kill Your Television Theatre shacks up with Sam Shepard's sexiest script
[By PAUL MATWYCHUK] • 44



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ON THE COVER

A hot-blooded drifter in cowboy boots. A seedy motel on the edge of the Mojave Desert. A sweaty, sultry gal in a low-cut red dress climbing the walls. A grizzled, alcoholic old man invisibly watching the two of them circle hungrily around each other. *Fool for Love* has all the ingredients for a super-sexy night of theatre. Okay, except for the part about the grizzled old man. That's just creepy • 44



FRONT

Selling by stealth:
the rise of guerrilla
marketing • 7



MUSIC

Electric
Frankenstein:
They're alive!
They're alive! • 23



FILM

A Life less
ordinary: *Last Life
in the Universe* on
DVD • 39



yourVUE

Bicycles amid the icicles

Like *Vue* writer Joseph Simons ("Frozen Pedals," February 24-March 2), I too am an all-year-round biker and have experienced the joys of the -33°C commute. I started about the same time as Joseph, about 15 years ago. When I began I did not have the multi LED vest I have now. Neither did I have a proper winter bike or the level of humility that must go along with the vulnerability of bike riding. The eventual outcome was being hit from behind by a taxi on its way to a lucrative fare and suffering a broken fibula. I have since acquired all the essential accoutrements for biking bliss and have never looked back.

We bikers are unlikely to suffer heart attacks with anywhere near the same frequency as our motorized brothers and sisters. We keep our weight down and our fitness level up. There are no parking fees or massive bills for transmis-

repairs. I need a new chain every couple of years and a regular supply of chain lube, but very little beyond that. We don't suffer with road rage or the frustration of driving around in endless circles trying to find a space to park. My commute is almost as long as it was pre-bike.

I also ride almost exclusively on the sidewalk after the first snowfall. (Yes, I know it's illegal.) When the cycling community grows to such an extent that my sidewalk riding inconveniences anyone I will be the first to take my chances on the road. In general the motorized public are courteous and respectful of our vulnerability. The minority that aren't are split between the blissfully ignorant, who simply do not realize that they must give us a bit of space, and the few who genuinely don't like us for whatever reason.

Looking back to when I burned fossil fuels I can say I was often not fully awake, even when I arrived at work. Now, I have a higher level of energy, a greater sense of personal achievement and can eat more. Finally there is the knowledge that we are helping reduce the amount of green-

house gases entering our overloaded atmosphere. All governments will eventually have to deal with global warming—it isn't going away. Just because the biggest polluter on the planet is refusing (for now) to accept restrictions doesn't mean we must all be that stupid.

In the not-too-distant future, when the science of climate change becomes irrefutable, Canada and our Kyoto allies will be well down the road toward the new energy-restrained economy. The U.S. will be coming to us for technological solutions to that problem as well as to alleviate the burden of \$50+ per barrel petroleum prices. —DAVID PARKER, EDMONTON

Vue Weekly welcomes reader response, both positive and negative. Send your opinion by mail (*Vue Weekly*, 10303-108 Street, Edmonton, AB, T5J 1L7), by fax ((780) 426-2889) or by e-mail (letters@vneweekly.com). Preference is given to feedback about articles in *Vue Weekly*; we reserve the right to edit letters for length and clarity. Please include a daytime telephone number.

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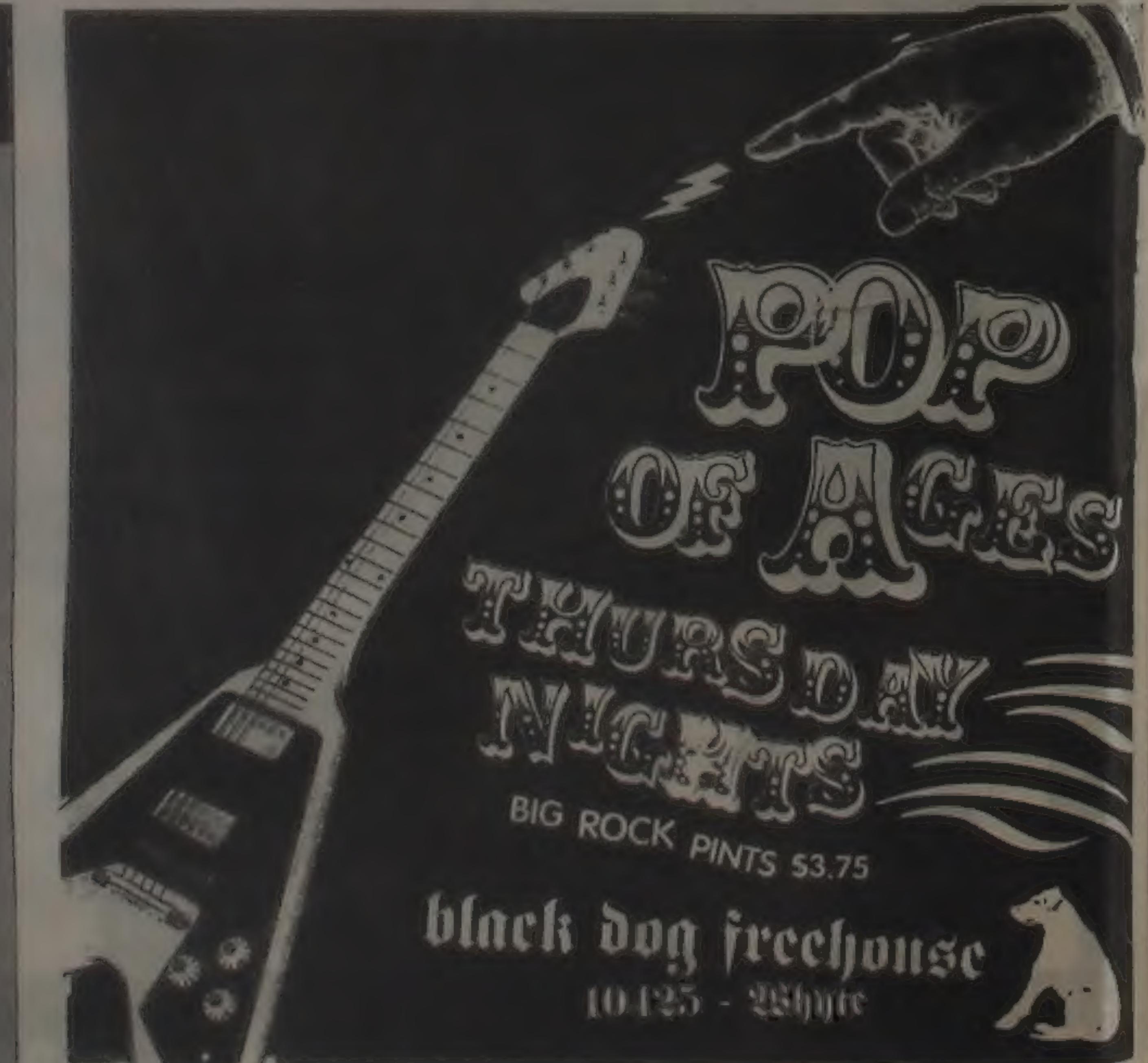
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His brother's keeper

Artist David B. follows his brother into the black hole of mental illness in *Epileptic*

BY PAUL MATWYCHUK

David B., the creator of the new autobiographical graphic novel *Epileptic*, was born in 1959 to bookish if not quite intellectual parents in a small town just outside Orléans, France. His birth name was Pierre-François Beauchard, but almost exactly halfway through the book he announces to his family that he's adopted a new name: David. As he explains it, his decision is prompted partly by his teenage fascination with Jewish myths and legends, partly by a desire to antagonize his anti-Semitic grandfather and partly by the vague association his mother makes between Jewishness and a talent for high artistic achievement.

But you can't help but wonder, after you've finished the book, whether David was in fact unconsciously emulating the much more terrifying transformation his older brother Jean-Christophe was then undergoing. Jean-Christophe began having epileptic seizures at the age of 11, often several times a day, and

over the years that followed, David watched him change from the brother he once knew into a bitter, withdrawn, antisocial freak completely unable (and unwilling) to engage with society, even during his lucid moments. David narrates this sad, troubling story in simple, matter-of-fact language at the top of each comic panel, but the accompanying black-and-white illustrations (reminiscent of the childlike, woodcut-influenced style Marjane Satrapi uses in her *Persepolis* books) are often full of wild, dreamlike imagery—his brother's epilepsy, for instance, is fre-

REVUE GRAPHIC NOVEL

quently visualized as a stylized snake emerging from his brother's body and wrapping itself around the bodies of other members of his family.

AND INDEED, the rest of Jean-Christophe's family are affected by his epilepsy almost as profoundly as he is. The most compelling (as well as the most frustrating) sections of the book depict the endless parade of crackpot cures the Beauchards employ in hopes of curing their son. They try macrobiotics, they try acupuncture, they try Rosicrucianism, they try Swedenborgianism, they consult mediums, they consult exorcists, they meet with a specialist

in magnetism who sells the family a bunch of "catalyzers" that he claims will remove the negative vibrations in their bodies—they even meet with a British plumber who claims to be the "carnal envelope" for a dead Tibetan lama.

And he's not even the most insane figure David's parents fall under the sway of—there's one guy at their first macrobiotic camp who tries to force everyone to adopt his new policy of eating only rancid food, and there's another crazy macrobiotic guy who runs around with half his head shaved—his regime is so strict that when the young son of one of his followers faints from hunger, he won't even allow her him a glass of water. It's a ridiculous way to live, yet David understands his mother's helpless position: "Paths that might potentially lead to a cure keep opening up," he writes, "and so long as my mother hasn't tried every single one, she'll be tormented by guilt." And sometimes the cures really do seem to help Jean-Christophe: he'll go for several weeks without a seizure... only to start having them again, even worse than ever.

BY THE END of the book, Jean-Christophe is a pitiful sight. Medication and lack of exercise have made him fat, there are scars on his face, missing teeth and a bald spot on the

top of his head from his frequent falls and he's prone to unpredictable flashes of violent anger. David loves his brother—he still has fond memories of the comic books they created together in their youth—but Jean-Christophe is also just an unpleasant person to be around:



lazy, resentful and rather unbecomingly obsessed with Hitler. (David's illustrations do an excellent job of portraying himself and his brother as they age—you can see David evolving from a shaggy-haired kid into a fashionable-looking, clean-cut grownup while Jean-Christophe never really outgrows his weedy teenage self.)

The book takes several lengthy detours into the Beauchards' family history which I could have easily done without. True, in one scene, David defends these sections to his mother, saying that he sees his ancestors' stories and her attempts to cure Jean-Christophe's epilepsy as all part of a common struggle to escape the misery of life. But I hated to get sidetracked from the relationship between the two brothers, which is so compelling and emotional—as hard as he tries to distance himself from Jean-Christophe, David really isn't much different from him. He has visions too: ghostly images of his dead grandfather and characters from books. He's prone to seizures too—bouts of artistic inspiration that result in bizarre drawings and stories that even he can't make any sense of. When he goes to a fertility doctor and learns that all his sperm have two heads, David pictures his own face on one and Jean-Christophe's face on the other.

That image, which links creativity to the frightening, inescapable bonds of family, is the perfect emblem for this absorbing book, one of the most accomplished creations of what's starting to look like a golden age for graphic novels. **•**

By David B. • Pantheon • 361 pp. • \$33

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BY RICHARD BURNETT

Those crazy Canucks

The world is watching Canada as we inch closer to legalizing same-sex civil marriage, which would make Canada just the third country in the world to do so, after the Netherlands and Belgium. Many argue fighting for the right to marry caps a phenomenally successful Canadian gay civil rights movement which really took off in English Canada with the entrenchment of individual rights in 1982's Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. French-Canadians got the ball rolling in 1977 after Montreal police raided the downtown Truxx nightclub in what the *Advocate* magazine called "Canada's Stonewall."

But despite Canada's impending gay nuptials, all is not well in Canuckistan. Just look at the slew of anti-gay incidents in recent days. Famous Players, Canada's largest movie chain, pulled all "issue-driven advertising" from its 79 theatres after pre-film ads supporting same-sex marriage ignited a nationwide boycott by social conservatives. Famous Players claims they pulled the ad after their employees got abusive and threatening phone calls.

And Toronto's Glad Day Bookstore, after spending more than \$1 million on legal fees, lost revenue and seized inventory since 1970, announced it can no longer afford to challenge Canada Customs and the Ontario Film Review Board. "Our goal in part is to provide the widest possible selection of lesbian and gay titles available," store manager Toshiya Kuwabara told reporters. [Government individuals] seem to feel that we do not have the right to express ourselves, that we do not have the right to choose what we can see, read or hear for ourselves."

Vancouver's Little Sisters Bookstore has spent \$750,000 over 20 years fighting seizures by Canada Customs. Last week the B.C. Court of Appeal reversed a July 2004 ruling that would have given Little Sisters an unspecified sum of money to take Customs to the Supreme Court of Canada. Now Little Sisters' lawyer Joe Arvay says a seven-week trial would cost his clients \$1.1 million. "No one is watching over Canada Customs in the decisions they make," says store co-owner Jim Deva. "And if indeed we are not watching, then there is no one watching."

There's also the outrageous six-year manslaughter prison term for 23-year-old

Ryan Cran for the November 2001 Vancouver group gay-bashing death of Aaron Webster. "What motivated this group to chase and beat Mr. Webster remains obscure," B.C. Supreme Court Justice Mary Humphries stated in court. "What is so chilling about this case is that this group seems to have done this for some reprehensible and almost inconceivable concept of entertainment."

The Ottawa-based gay-rights lobby group Égale Canada is so incensed over Cran's sentence that they have called for a public inquiry to investigate how the B.C. Crown prosecutor handled the case. But is anyone listening?

And here in Alberta the Crown has finally dropped all charges resulting from a December 2002 police raid on Calgary bathhouse Goliath's—but only after employees and found-ins hired lawyers and saw their reputations smeared in the media. Ultimately, Crown prosecutor David Torkse told the court he could not prove gay sex violated community standards.

In sharp contrast there is PM Paul Martin's speech introducing Canada's Civil Marriage Act in the House of Commons on February 16. As I watched Martin on live TV, parts of his speech made me unexpectedly emotional. "For gays and lesbians, evolving social attitudes have, over the years, prompted a number of important changes in the law," Martin stated. "Recall that, until the late 1960s, the state believed it had the right to peek into our bedrooms. Until 1977, homosexuality was still sufficient grounds for deportation. Until 1992, gay people were prohibited from serving in the military. In many parts of the country, gays and lesbians could not designate their partners as beneficiaries under employee medical and dental benefits, insurance policies or private pensions. Until very recently, people were being fired merely for being gay."

"Today," Martin continued, "we rightly see discrimination based on sexual orientation as arbitrary, inappropriate and unfair. Looking back, we can hardly believe that such rights were ever a matter for debate. It is my hope that we will ultimately see the current debate [over same-sex marriage] in a similar light."

Yes, it's true Martin draped himself in the Charter. Yes, it's true he had no other cards left to play. But make no mistake: Martin's speech was historic—even epic—because never has a Canadian prime minister ever spoken so clearly in support of gay life. Ever.

"Put simply," Martin said, repeating an old gay-rights slogan, "we must always remember that 'separate but equal' is not equal."

Clearly, a wedding band will not resolve all of our problems. There will be no honeymoon. But our world is changing at long last. I don't know about you, but I can distinctly feel the earth shifting beneath our feet. ☺

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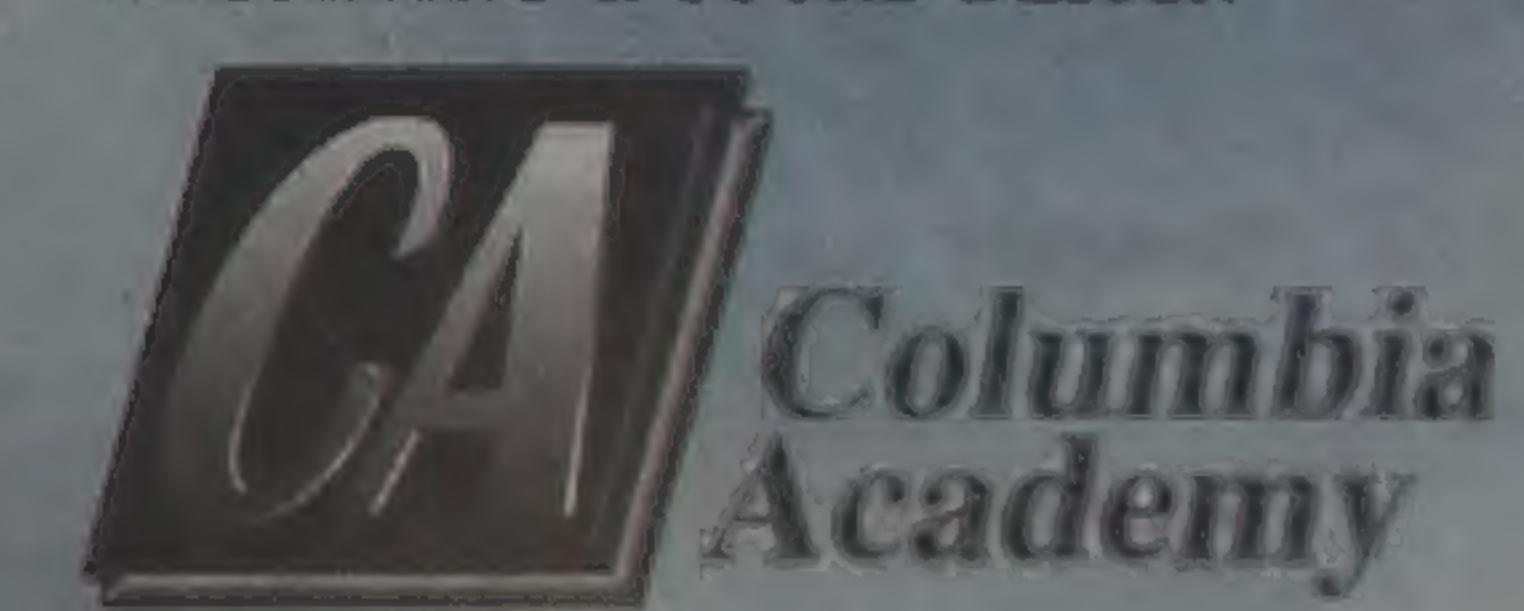
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e-mail: office@vneweekly.com
website: www.vneweekly.com

Issue Number 489

March 3-9, 2005

available at over 1,400 locations

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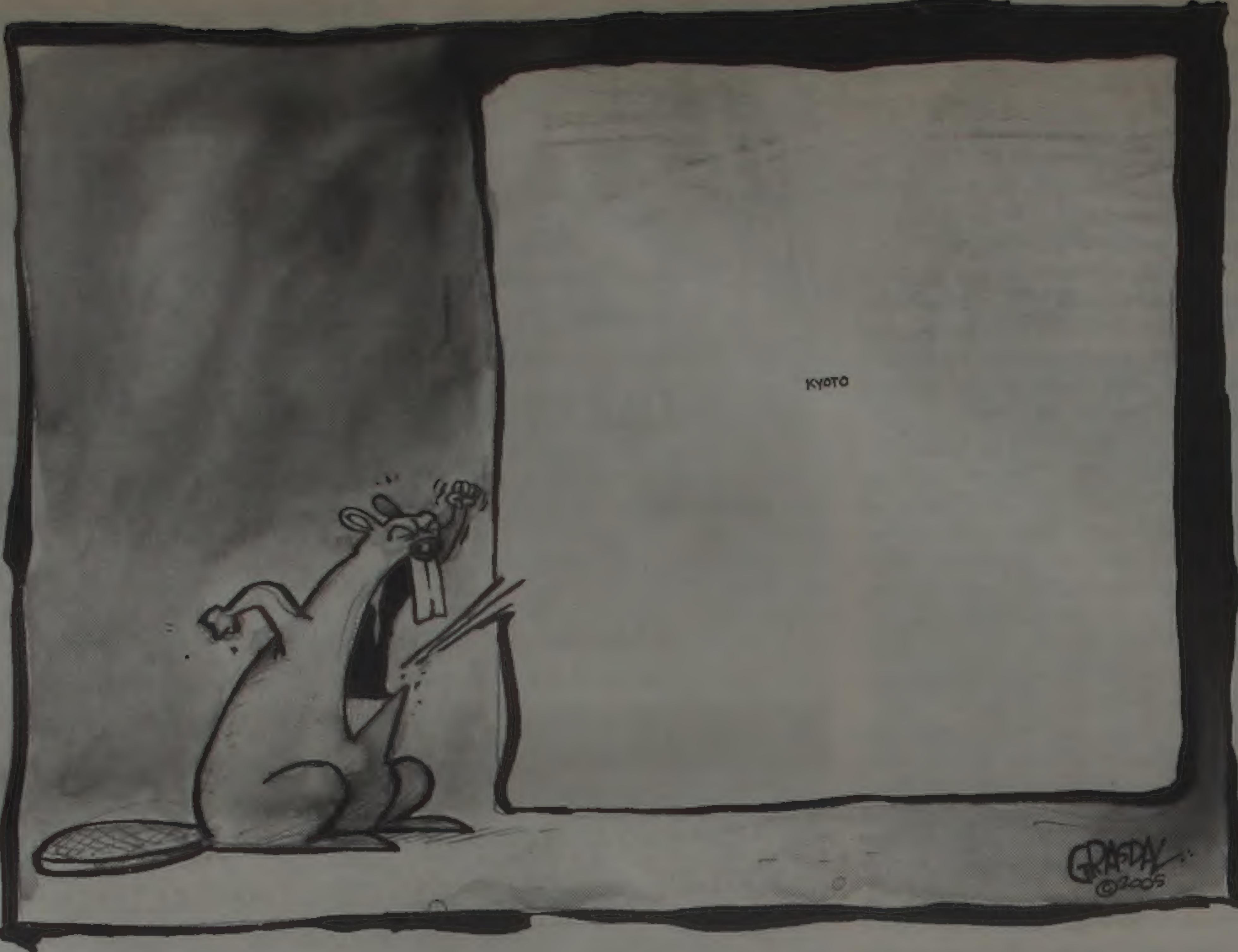
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news roundup

BY CHRIS BOUTET

DRUGS: FANTASTIC!

Perhaps realizing that most voters don't actually want to elect representatives from blatantly single-issue parties into positions of authority—and especially not if that single issue just happens to be the legalization of marijuana—the founder of the Marijuana Canada Party threw up his hands earlier this week and announced that he was joining the federal Liberals, who, like him, are all horny for pot, but, unlike him, not so much that they named their party after it.

According to reports from the Canadian Press on Tuesday, Marc-Boris St-Maurice (or, as he's known to his friends, the Frenchest-Named French Guy in French County, New Franceington), who led the Marijuana Canada party from its creation in 2000 until December 2004, formally announced he was jumping ship, stating that he felt he would have a better chance of actually achieving his goal of marijuana legalization with a more mainstream party.

"I believe that if any party will ever legalize marijuana in Canada, it's the Liberals," wrote St-Maurice in a statement, going on to say that he plans to drum up support for his views at the party convention, which begins this Thursday in Ottawa. "I think there is widespread support for marijuana reform within the Liberal party..., and I look forward to working with them to bring about this positive change."

It seems the Liberals are the party to do it with; last year, they introduced

Bill C-17 into the House of Commons, which sought to decriminalize simple possession of small amounts of pot—although while the Libs were suggesting a limit of 15 grams and the Tories a limit of one or two, the NDP wanted to decriminalize the possession of 30 grams of drugs—or just enough for someone to make a little hat out of. You know, because hemp is, like, nature's cloth.

JERK: GONE!

After almost two years of being held without charge in a Toronto jail under the auspices of national security, Holocaust denier and 40-year resident of Canada Ernst Zundel was released and deported back to Germany, reported the CBC.

Zundel, the author of such books as *The Hitler We Love and Why* and the subject of about a hundred forests' worth of press releases sent by freedom activists to *Vue Weekly* during his detainment, was finally jammed onto a plane Tuesday after a Federal Court judge found him to be a threat to national security due to his connections with white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups. Once back in Germany, Zundel is expected to be prosecuted for spreading hate.

GAY MARRIAGE: TERRIFYING!

Maybe you haven't heard, or you just haven't read the slug directly above this yet, but yeah: gay marriage? It's totally scary. For months it seems, doomsayers have been wandering the Canadian plains warning all the good, God-kissing boys and girls that the second the government opens up the Charter to allow same-sex marriage in Canada, the country will be instantly swept up in a hellstorm of debauchery and immorality as people everywhere scramble to marry everything to something: daughters to wives, cats to dogs, fridges to magnets—nothing will

be spared in the crazy, hedonistic free-for-all that letting two people who love each other get married will usher in.

But of all these concerns, by far the concern that same-sex marriage will eventually lead to the legalization of polygamy is, apparently, the concerniest. The Canadian Press reported Monday that it had obtained a hastily commissioned report ordered by the federal justice department last month with the intent of putting these polygamic worries to rest and helping the federal government weather any legal challenge in B.C. to the ban on polygamy.

"Concerns have been raised by some that in changing one aspect of the legal capacity to marry to allow equal access to civil marriage for same-sex couples, all the other aspects of legal capacity may also be vulnerable to attack under the Charter, including the ban on polygamy," read the document, written by Vesna Radulovic, senior research analyst for Status of Women Canada, and obtained by CP under the Access to Information Act. "The government will likely be called upon to reassure Canadians it is possible to hold the line on civil marriage, by retaining the requirement for monogamy and other restrictions in minimum age and marriage between close relatives."

This reassurance is most needed in B.C., where the RCMP is currently investigating the religious community of Bountiful, in which polygamy is openly practiced. According to the *Globe and Mail*, the province's attorney general wants to prosecute, but legal experts question whether the polygamy ban will hold up if challenged under the Constitution.

While some feel the feds commissioned the report to quell their fears that they would be opening the door to a world of unspeakable horror, Justice Minister Irwin Cotler denied the study is in any way connected to the issue of same-sex marriage, after which he grabbed the first available stray cat and married it to his desk. ☺



vuepoint

BY EMMA SASSE

Rice burners

Contortions of deference should be reserved for puppies who just peed on the floor, not sovereign governments, but Prime Minister Paul Martin and his retinue of sycophants seem to relish the self-flagellation that accompanied their "decision" (read: concession to the polls) to, at least publicly, distance our country from the American missile defence scheme.

Since then, the Liberals have pleaded with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to grace us with a meeting, they've left phone messages with W., but he doesn't seem to be taking our calls. They've reiterated their commitment to military spending (\$13 billion! Over five years!) and they've even mumbled something about sovereignty, all in order to atone for the grave sin of listening to the Canadian people.

But pay attention to the language: the PM never says he made his decision because the people of Canada don't want missile defence. When you're confronted with the serious business of Defending the Empire, listening to the people just isn't a factor on grave matters of international security.

And the mainstream media plays along with gleeful complicity. The *Globe and Mail* intones that Canada must "warm the often-frosty relationship" between Canada and the U.S.—such phrases appear as a matter of course, but the substance of the relationship between our two countries belies the editorializing rampant in the so-called news: Canada remains the U.S.'s largest trading partner, we remain a staunch American ally at the WTO and last fall we even quietly changed our position at the UN on Israel and Palestine to bring us more in line with the hawkish Yanks. But for the chattering classes, a snub or an alleged unreturned phone call—the politics of personality and palace intrigue—trumps substance every time.

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew's senior bureaucrat lamented this week that Canada's wrangling with the U.S. is part of a "complex relationship." Indeed. The relationship between master and servant is always complex, particularly when the servant asserts their need for basic rights. But it seems that Canadians don't really care about getting our national panties in a knot over whether Rice will give us a five-minute photo op the next time she's scheduled to show her pissed-off terrier face on Canadian soil. And we don't care that W. isn't returning our calls, mostly because the majority of our citizens wouldn't have bothered to phone him up in the first place. ☺



Illustration by Graham Johnson

Guerrillas in their midst

Why are advertisers increasingly using "stealth marketing" techniques to hawk their products?

By CHRISTOPHER THRALL

A sleek figure moves silently through the retail jungle, her trim business-casual attire blending into the environment. She is dark, dangerous, yet almost completely unnoticed until she strikes: "Excuse me?" She has the attention of a hapless group of students. "Have you received your invitation yet?" The phrase is carefully calculated to intrigue the puzzled girls. Were they excluded from some list? Were they missing out on something?

From there, she tells them all about a special spa-club promotion, one that the group likely would have ignored as they walked past a table covered with literature. One of the girls shakes her head, but another takes a brochure, which the smiling young woman produces from her nondescript black bag. With that, the guerrilla marketer fades back into the mall undergrowth to await her next target....

Part psychology and part misdirection, guerrilla marketing is all about catching people off-guard and selling them something before they even realize that the person they're talking to is a salesman. With conventional forms of targeted advertising seemingly becoming easier to ignore, more and more companies

have begun developing increasingly creative means to promote their products or services without spending the huge stacks of money that print, television, radio or outdoor advertising demands. "Guerrilla" was the name given to a military assistant to the Duke of Wellington who devised novel, unpredictable tactics to force back Napoleon's troops during the French Wars; today, guerrilla marketing places the same importance on breaking the rules.

As Maureen Wagner, chair of public relations at Grant MacEwan College, explains, guerrilla marketing first began to emerge in the '80s once companies began to question the returns on their huge marketing budgets. And as market segmentation increased, she explains, budgets were slashed. "Combine this with an explosive growth in technology," Wagner says, "and suddenly there were growing numbers of niche markets with far more ways to reach them." Organizations quickly began looking for other ways to reach their customers, especially in highly competitive industries. They explored new techniques, deploying (usually very attractive and charismatic) marketers at street level to converse face-to-face with potential customers at events, bars and shopping malls.

ONE OF THE TREND'S earliest successes occurred in the mid-'80s, when North America's top running-shoe manufacturer, wanting to cultivate some street cred, handed out free pairs of sneakers to up-and-coming rap groups in New York City, hoping

that the fashion would catch on with their fans across the United States. The idea exceeded anyone's wildest dreams: in 1986, Run DMC's single "My Adidas" hit #5 on the R&B charts and set the benchmark for footwear fashion for the next five years.

The street promoters, event cruisers and "buy me a drink" girls of the 1980s gradually evolved into the guerrilla marketers of the 1990s and the so-called relationship networking of today. "[Marketing guru] J.C. Levinson coined the term 'guerrilla marketing' itself," explains Jared Smith of Edmonton's Incite Solutions. "He showed that networks and

MEDIA

low-cost scenarios are better able to drive specific messages home to specific people than the carpet-bombing techniques of conventional advertising." Incite specializes in word-of-mouth marketing, a tactic that differs from the militaristic mindset of guerrilla marketing's origins.

Guerrilla marketing, Smith explains, involves much more than publicity stunts: it can include special events held for specific types of consumers or even newsletters placed on parking lot windshields. (In an effort to keep publishing his authoritative advertising guides, Levinson has extended its definition to apply to almost every marketing activity that strays from the conventional.) But at the end of the day, the object is to develop the buzz. "Remember *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood?*" Smith

says, referring to Rebecca Wells's novel, one of the books that kickstarted the current "chick-lit" craze. "It got about as much promotion as any first-time author receives: almost none. Instead, the author decided to promote the book directly to hairdressers, and by extension, they hit their 35- to 45-year-old female demographic perfectly. Suddenly it's a best-seller and a movie."

WITH A COST of mere pennies per contact, guerrilla marketers use innovative tactics that get them directly in touch with potential customers. "It's harder and harder to reach people these days," says the regional marketing manager for a company she requested remain unnamed, "especially if you don't have a lot of money." She is a calm and engaging woman in her early 40s, whose company pioneered network marketing before there was a term to describe it. "We've never really gone for advertising—we try to talk directly to people who might be interested in our service," she says. "The results are a lot better than if we spent thousands of dollars on an ad in the *Journal*."

I watch as she approaches some of her favourite targets: students in HUB Mall. Her service relies on recruiting members who then sell their friends and family products from an all-encompassing catalogue of merchandise. Her manner changes completely as she starts talking up the three young men: she's suddenly uncertain and a little frazzled, and I see the guys reacting sympathetically

to her. She is past their defences. They answer her questions, smiling as she seemed to become more confident; ultimately, their conversation ends with head-shakes, and she returns to our table and sits down with a shrug and a smile. "More often than not, it's a no," she confides, "but you just have to keep trying."

Later, Derek Ellis, a third-year business student at the U of A and one of the young men she had approached, commented on the experience. "I have no problem with someone coming up to me and talking about a new product or service," he exclaims. "How else am I supposed to find out about anything?" Ellis sees thousands of advertisements a day and doesn't have time to consider each one, so he figures anything that breaks through the noise is probably worth a moment of his time. Although Ellis questioned its effectiveness, since none of his group was interested, he did admire the courage it would take to walk up to strangers all the time and strike up conversation.

"I don't mind hearing what she has to say," blushes Nadia Petrova, a first-year arts student who gave her contact information to the marketer. "Tuition is very high and I work part-time while I study. I must look at any chances to make more money." Petrova wasn't sure what the opportunity was, exactly, but she was willing to wait for the phone call to set up a preliminary interview. "I want to know how to make



life after gretzky

By CHRIS BOUTET

I'm a stranger here myself

Hopefully it's no great secret that, despite my penchant for getting "all up" in Edmonton's "grill" and talking with the feigned authority of a lifelong Albertan, well, I'm not really from here. I was actually born in Ottawa, and for the first few years of my life I lived in Gatineau—which, in case you've never heard of it, is located just across the Ontario border in the Province That Alberta Would Most Love to Punch If It Could Grow Arms That Reached That Far: big, dumb, oil-revenue-stealing Quebec.

So yeah, even though I've lived here for almost 14 years, at my very core I'm not really an Albertan. My girlfriend, on the other hand? Totally from here. And as such, she tends to get pretty defensive whenever some dinkwallet from another province starts speculating about how much it must suck to live in such a politically regressive shitpit ruled by that drunken premier who keeps getting elected by Canada's most profoundly rural-tarded population. It's not like my girlfriend necessarily disagrees with people's assessment of Klein and his politics, of course; she just takes exception to the assumption that to be an Albertan, one must either totally agree with Klein or spend every waking moment pining for death.

Me, on the other hand, I never really got why she always took things so personally, and I usually reacted to the same comments with indifferent bemusement, because hey! I'm not really from here! I could always retreat from such conversations with a quick flash of my Ontario birth certificate and a knowing tap on the nose.

Last week, however, something changed. I received an e-mail at work

from an Ontarian gentleman, who, for no particular reason, wrote to ask me what it was like to "live in a province that more and more people are referring to as Canada's Alabama."—Somewhat amazed that a total stranger felt comfortable effectively asking me how I liked being an uneducated, right-wing hillbilly, I instinctively went on the defensive. How do I like living here? I like it just fucking fine, jerkass! Edmonton's a great city—probably one of the best places I've ever lived, in fact. Do I agree with the politics of our rural population/evil premier? Why the shit would I? Few Redmontonians do—and hey, who the hell are you to be judging me based on the politics of a few....

Whoa. Slowly, I began to understand. I recalled a moment two Novembers ago, when I was editor-in-chief of the U of A's paper; we had just hosted a western regional journalism conference, and afterward we caught wind of an editorial a woman from the Simon Fraser University paper had written upon her return to Vancouver. As a black woman, she wrote, she had come to the conference in Edmonton expecting to encounter that famous backwoods Alberta racism, and, unsurprisingly, she had not been disappointed: a campus bartender didn't give her a lemon on her Grasshopper—not because he was admittedly busy, you see, but because he was an Albertan and therefore racist. I remembered how angry it made my staff, and most of all my girlfriend (who was news editor), as she took the time to write a long, infuriated letter to the paper expressing her disgust. I was a little pissed myself, I recall, but not to the same degree.

But as I found myself getting angrier and angrier at E-mail Guy, I suddenly understood: this is how it feels to have someone assume you're an idiot hick for no reason other than for your geographical location, to feel at once obligated to defend your home province to outsiders and resentful of the fact that you had to justify your choice of home at all to some jizzwad Ontarian with elefantiasis of the ego.

Yes, I had finally become an Albertan—and let me tell ya, life was a lot easier when I still considered myself an Easterner. Man, why do you people live here, anyway? ☺

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BY DARREN ZENKO

Who's the boss?

Kirk. Is my problem the bad feelings that arise when I see myself reflected in the TV screen playing videogames? Then I'll simply stop playing games on the TV by taking my GBA to bed with me and stapling heavy canvas over my sunshiny window. These were February's days (and still blessedly long nights) of rediscovering (for like, the 20th time) the magic of the *Zelda* games with *The Minish Cap*. I love the GBA *Zelda* titles for their necessary fidelity, being 2D, to the prototypical top-down, field-and-dungeon action-adventure puzzle games. This isn't to say they're static and old-fashioned; there's always some new and cool modulation in the mix, something that transcends gimmickry and permeates the whole game experience. In this case there's a micro-world existing alongside the macro-world, the domain of the tiny Minish, a daydream fulfillment for those of us who raised ourselves on *Borrowers*/*Smurfs*/*Fraggles* fantasies, which Link can enter by means of shrinking, thanks to a wise-cracking magic hat. Between the intertwined layers of life in this version of the land of Hyrule and a bunch of new gear, *The Minish Cap* offers up a shitload of fresh and frustrating puzzle gameplay.

Electronic computer brains can only do so much; for real fantasy adventures you've got to go to the dining room table.

game like *Thief* under those conditions, you can't prevent your eyes from occasionally focusing a little too deep, and suddenly instead of the evil cultist you're supposed to be blackjacking, you see yourself, slackjawed, palefaced, sitting way too close to the screen. You crowd farther to the right to avoid the sun and its illusion-shattering rays until eventually you're crammed up against the wall, huddled in the tiny patch of shadow cast by the set itself like some sort of cowering Nosferatu, praying to your dark gods for the hated Chariot of Apollo to get back in the barn already.

A real wake-up call, that was. True to form, I didn't meet the sun's challenge but rather changed the rules, just like that great lover of astro-women and notorious cheat Captain

Especially cool is how small, wimpy enemies like Leevers become full-blown Boss Monsters when you're tiny.

Speaking of *Boss Monsters*, does anybody know of any real advances in Boss Monster technology in the last 10 years? *Minish Cap*'s boss fights were decent as far as they go, but they're still mathematical pattern affairs straight out of the eight-bit age: "After it shoots three fireballs, it'll roar and expose his glowing red eye! Attack twice then jump to avoid its attack. Avoid the next wave of fireballs and repeat..." I can't even just chalk it up to the retro nature of *Zelda* games; it's everywhere like this. Play *Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath* and check it out. The bosses are pretty cool and all, and the game's a real blast—if you're not getting depressed thinking about ex-girlfriends

with whom you played and loved earlier games in the series—but there's nothing new there outside of the "live ammo" system (you launch tiny living critters instead of bullets or whatever) which is itself just an interesting front end for the usual action-game arsenal. The boss fights are pure *Contra*.

I don't even know how boss fights could really be improved; it seems there's always going to be a script and a pattern. Maybe with the gradual expansion in the numbers of people going online with their consoles, there's a role for real human players to control bosses? Like, you'll be playing the single-player game, but when you get to the boss fight there's a real person on the other end of the line controlling the giant robot or whatever, mixing things up and adapting to your strategy. I doubt there'd be a shortage of players logging on to play the Bosses; gamers love to be evil shits, and this is a great opportunity to do so, mercilessly and mockingly—just map a palette of appropriate sound clips ("Run, coward!") to unused but-

tons and there you go.*

Better yet, ditch videogames entirely, as I have been sorely tempted to do on and off over the last couple months. What I'm getting into these days is real old-school pen-and-paper role-playing gaming. Well, not actually getting into, but I'm certainly thinking about and talking about them a lot. I picked up the fifth edition of the Hero System rules the other day (at a steal of a price; thanks Wee Book Inn!) and there's something about that way of looking at games that just excites the

imagination. Being forced to consider limitations and disadvantages when creating characters is a real spark to the imagination, and every flaw, drawback or hassle presents countless opportunities for plot twists and story springboards. Electronic computer brains can only do so much; for real fantasy adventures you've got to go to the dining room table. I'm getting excited just thinking about it! ☺

**Disclaimer: I don't actually think this live-boss idea would work very well.*

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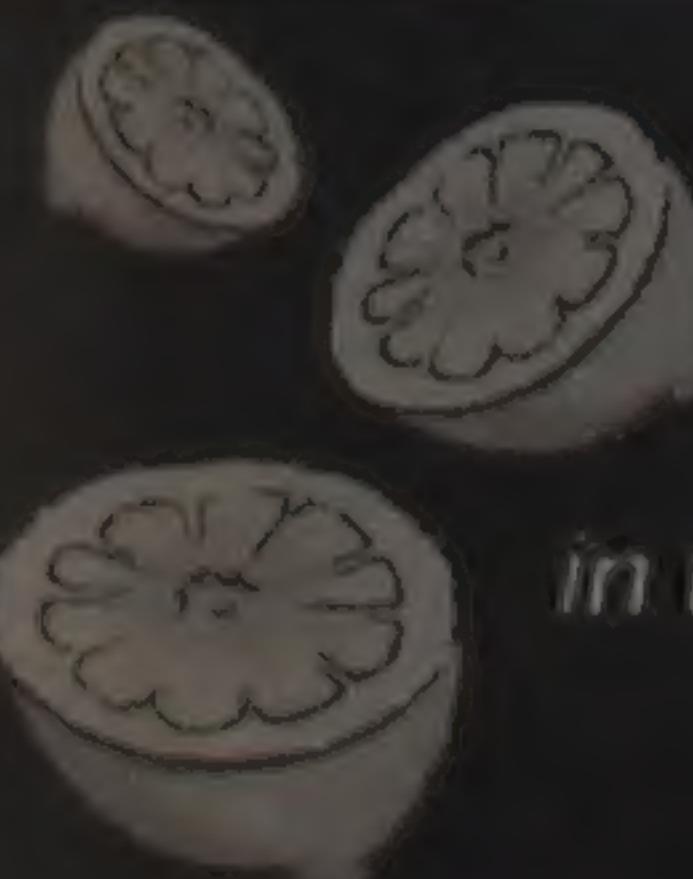
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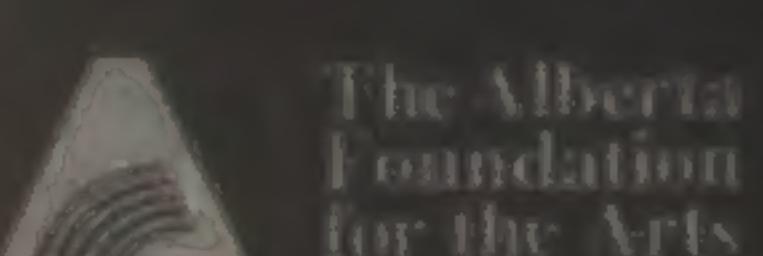
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The gospel according to Mark

Mark Helprin marries Republican themes to a deeply democratic worldview in *The Pacific*

BY PAUL MATWYCHUK

I can't think of another author of Mark Helprin's literary standing who seems less interested in writing about flawed characters. The gallery of Helprin's protagonists is populated almost exclusively by paragons: virtually to a man (and woman), they are brave, wise, sensitive, scholarly but also skilled with their hands, well-traveled, willing to endure incredible amounts of self-sacrifice in the service of a greater good—and, as if that weren't enough, incredibly good-looking too. The men are ruggedly handsome without being pretty boys—they're much too busy pursuing the noble mission of their lives to vainly waste time in front of a mirror. And the women are all heart-stoppingly beautiful: graceful, divine, strong-willed yet utterly feminine. (When Helprin does create a female character who isn't beautiful, as he does in "Last Tea With the Armorer," the concept practically blows his mind—he can't stop marveling over the fact

that she's ordinary-looking, and the story's big climax comes when a male character falls in love with her and decides she's beautiful anyway.)

Helprin's standing in the writing community went down a few pegs when his conservative political leanings began getting more publicity than his literary achievements—he even served as a speechwriter during Bob Dole's presidential campaign. Now, whether an author is a Democrat or a Republican shouldn't make any difference to the value of his prose, but as I made my way through Helprin's latest collection of short fiction, *The Pacific and Other Stories*, I couldn't help but be struck by how Republican the

REVUE BOOKS

book's themes were. Helprin loves to write about upstanding businessmen, noble soldiers and other exemplars of old-fashioned virtues.

In "Monday," for instance, a building contractor decides to do the ultimate renovation on the apartment of a woman who lost her husband when the World Trade Center was destroyed, explaining the ruinously expensive assignment to his crew as a way of negating that tragedy—he calls upon the finest artisans in New York to contribute to the project, and he charges the woman absolutely nothing. "A Brilliant Idea and His Own" is an ago-

nizing account of a British paratrooper's efforts to complete a reconnaissance mission even though a faulty landing has stranded him on a rooftop in enemy territory with a shattered ribcage poking through his side. And the hero of "Sail Shining in White" is a retired businessman—still in peak physical condition at the age of 82—who decides, instead of dwindling away into decrepit old age, to set sail from the dock by his beachhouse and into a violent oncoming tropical storm. In Helprin's world, no one who has a lot of money doesn't deserve it and the people who lack money and social standing are happier without it. (That's the theme of "Il Colore Ritrovato," which opens the book.)

AND YET, when Helprin is writing at his peak, there's something about his earnestness and his idealism that's pretty irresistible. First of all, he writes beautifully—he's great both at playful, throwaway similes (in "Rain," a man in a rowboat is said to shed his jacket so quickly that "a shiny brass button was violently severed from the mid-coat and flew like a honeybee over the gunwales") and grand, sweeping descriptions of landscapes both interior and exterior (in "Prelude," he describes spring as the time of year "when grass sits lightly and evenly upon the fields, and trees are so green and delicate they seem to float up with the light"). Second, there's something admirable, even stirring, about Helprin's complete lack of interest in postmodern literary games. He's a maximalist storyteller who writes with total authority about sweeping emotions and people involved with important undertakings. His characters live rich lives that make you aspire to do great things yourself.

He also has a whimsical sense of humour that gets its fullest expression in two stories in which the secluded Jewish world confronts the fast-moving technological world of the gentiles. "Jacob Bayer and the Telephone" is an amusing (if perhaps overly didactic) parable about a small Jewish village that doesn't realize its soul has been destroyed by the introduction of the telephone; while "Perfection," the longest story in the collection, is a delightful fable about a young yeshiva student who turns out to have, literally, a God-given talent for hitting baseballs and becomes the star player for the 1956 New York Yankees.

I was in high school when I read Helprin's 1983 novel *Winter's Tale*, and it immediately became my very favourite book. It probably still is, but nothing else Helprin has written since has come close to capturing my imagination the way *Winter's Tale* did. *The Pacific and Other Stories* appears after two ambitious but uneven novels (*A Soldier of the Great War* and *Memoir From Antproof Case*), and despite its red-state-friendly themes, it's his most satisfying book in 20 years. Blue-staters can feel free to dive right in as well. ☺

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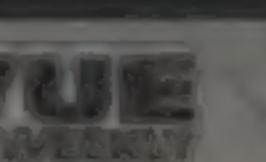
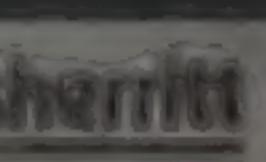
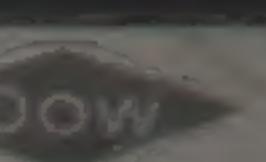
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"crazy money" she described.

"It was the 'crazy money' that set off my alarm bells," Michelle Carter says as she waits in line for her coffee. The psychology graduate was visiting a friend of hers on campus and had declined the guerrilla marketer's offer. "When she first approached me, I thought she looked lost," she explains. "She looked out of place in HUB, and that's why I stopped. If I had known it was going to be a pitch, I wouldn't have bothered."

According to Carter, the two women were asked if they were students and whether they worked. The marketer then started into a spiel about university students earning crazy money working for them and asked if they were interested. Carter wasn't, but her friend asked for a brochure. "It turned out that she didn't even have literature," Carter fumes. "She was just taking names and phone numbers to call back for preliminary interviews." The idea of someone asking for her personal information without identification, proof of affiliation with any particular group, or specific details about the organization or its offer struck her as plain stupid. "This active marketing stuff really bugs me," she says. "Put your cards on the table: if your product is worth my attention, I'll stop. Otherwise, fuck off."

MANY OF guerrilla marketing's most successful techniques, however, rely on stealth. Unannounced, Executrade Staffing bought breakfast for every patron one morning at a downtown Edmonton restaurant during Random Acts of Kindness week. Known to be frequented by corporate decision-makers and their clients, the gesture generated unprecedented buzz. Instead of sinking \$10,000 into advertising, an adventure tour company in Canmore built an ice-climbing wall and offered free lessons; within a week, everyone in town knew who the company was.

As guerrilla marketing techniques become more refined, some targets

aren't even aware of the pitch until they've become a customer. How about that guy at the bar who offered to buy you a Smirnoff Ice and lost interest when you asked for a rum and coke instead? What about that pair of pretty girls who asked you to take their picture and handed you a state-of-the-art camera phone? To some, these kinds of tactics are omens of the impending commercialization of both intrigue and public space—not with billboards and noise pollution, but with creative marketing and basic human interaction. Last month, a Nebraska man auctioned off his forehead online to the highest bidder for a month's advertising. He made \$37,375 (U.S.) and spawned a wave of imitators. The successful bidder surely attracted attention in the seller's home city, but the picture plastered in newspapers around the world was worth more than 100 times the purchase price.

According to Maureen Wagner, younger demographics are the most responsive target markets for guerrilla marketing, while older markets are still more effectively reached through traditional channels—this, however, is changing, as guerrilla marketing moves away from its edgy, confrontation-based roots and into the mainstream. (The term itself has become viewed as derogatory by an increasing portion of the marketing industry, so the techniques are now often referred to as "non-traditional.")

In the end, it's clear the consumer role is being redefined as more and more messages clamour for our attention. But what does it say about a product when a company has to trick people into hearing their pitch? And if an anonymous salesperson uses human courtesy to initiate a marketing tactic, is it a violation of human courtesy? "I felt like she was pretending to be a real person," reflects Michelle Carter as she watches the guerrilla marketer approach another group of students. "Like she was going to ask where she could find the ATM or noticed I had dropped my mitten or something. Instead, she turned out to be a salesperson. I was totally duped, and that pissed me off." □

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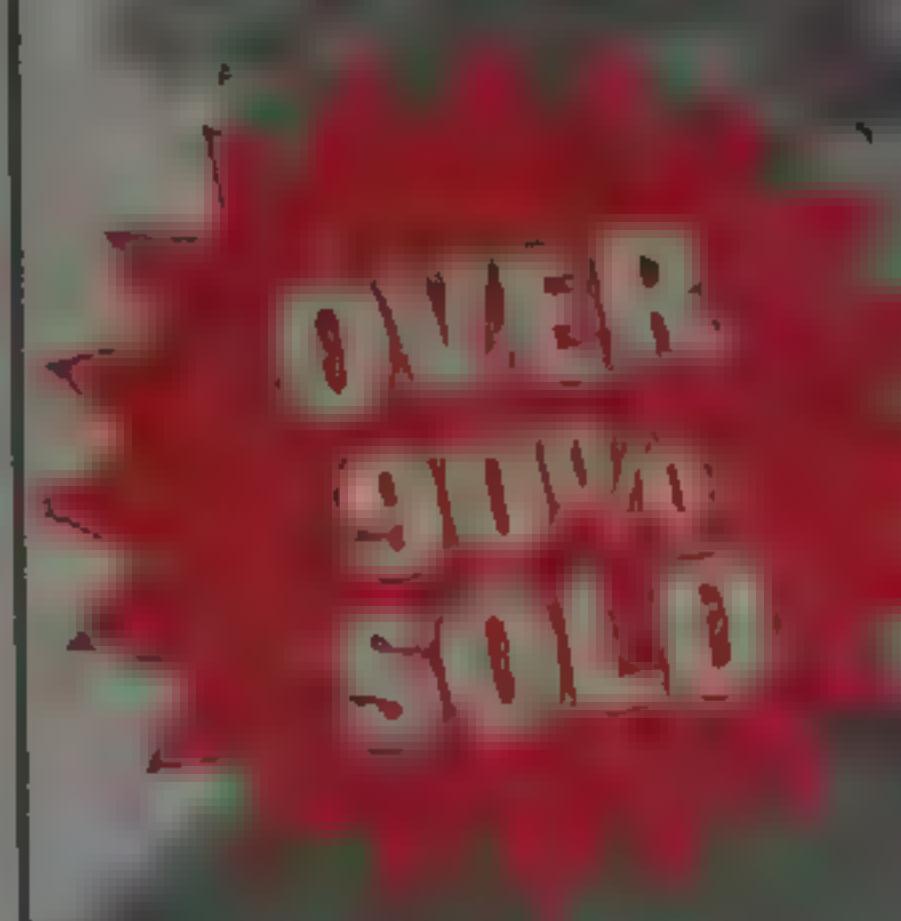
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By ADAM SMITH

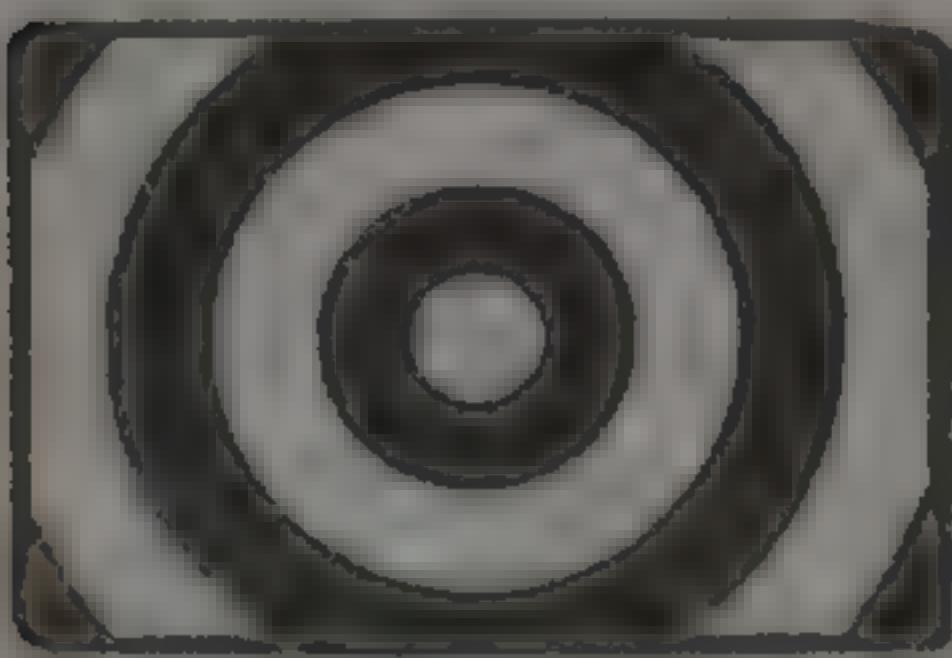
Drive nine hours straight west on the Yellowhead, bone North, right or Richard for those so inclined, and talk about capital punishment for two hours, and just as you make your closing argument, you'll arrive at Powder King: the backwoods-loggin', pulp-mill-workin', sled-pushin', whiskey-drinkin', pot-smokin', tree-crushin' ski resort of British Columbia's central interior. There are no hippies left here—they've all moved to the cities and the islands, to Nelson and the Slocan.

This hill is very different from other B.C. mountain resorts; the staff are small-towners and many of the things that go on here just wouldn't fly at the big-ticket joints down south. Nobody gives a shit what happens this far out of the loop, and the people at Powder King like it that way. There's definitely snow here and usually a hell of a lot of it; the King boasts an average snowfall of 41 feet.

I picked up Keith the Semite and we packed the hot rod for its last trip. I have been driving this vehicle

broken window and had food cooling in it. This was the only indication of any other inhabitants. In the men's bathroom, the sinks were full of garbage; slices of deluxe pizza had fossilized, somehow having evaded mould. The dorm-style rooms were reminiscent of what Lister Hall would look like if Mad Max and his posse took over. We unloaded and got some sleep.

POWDER KING is usually dumped on; it rarely goes a week without snow and it's never tracked out. But it had been a long week and a rare stretch of clear skies and snowless nights had prevailed, so finding good snow was tough. The first day we rode the mountain, which was impeccably groomed. There was some powder but good lines were few and far between. The terrain was solid and the scenery was beautiful. Just across the highway, facing the Powder Kings slopes, is the Murray mountain range, an impressive backdrop of huge white, steep faces lined up five or six peaks in a row. We got



PRIME SPOT

drunk with the staff in Chateau Atco and hoped for snow.

Overnight, some clouds came in and scattered in the blue sky. By morning, more than five inches of new snow had fallen. We found a lot of untracked tree runs, doing a few very short hikes here and there to stay in the soft snow. We hiked to the summit and took some photos of the beautiful ranges and valleys surrounding the mountain. The 30-minute hike to the top also provided an incredible run back down to the boundary, offering some steeps and a bunch of fresh, really, really deep turns, stuff that the rest of the mountain couldn't quite come up with. It was a solid day.

We were sore and hungry, so we took the drive to the town of Mackenzie, 40 kilometres to the south, to poach a hot tub and sauna. Incidentally, Mackenzie is supposedly home to the largest tree-crusher in the world. If a single hippie remained in the area, this gargantuan steel beast would be their last straw. The Semite said that it was the worst invention of all time. Mackenzie historian and Green Pepper Hockey League scoring genius Kevin Elmore said it's a fake—or at least its claims of tree-crushing dominance are. "In reality, the world's largest tree-crusher rests at the bottom of

for 20,000 kilometres sans papers, and Powder King was the last risk I was prepared to take. We packed our gear, boards, cooler, nunchucks, jumper cables, Roman candles, emergency blankets and beer (a tactical move to save a buck from the pricy B.C. provincial liquor economy). We crossed the divide into B.C., watching the Rockies rise and settle, and then we parted the legs of the Omineca Range in British Columbia's central interior.

It was early morning when we arrived and the place was as dead as we suspected it would be. The King is a solid mountain, but it's a little out of the way. No one was up, no one cared that we had arrived. The PR guy never crawled out of the bushes; he didn't even leave a light on. Chateau Atco is the moniker of the 60-room shanty that we wandered into through a door that hung heavily on a single hinge. The aptly named hotel is an assemblage of connected Atco trailers. A large padlock was drilled into the steel door, but there was no lock; we entered and were confronted by a pungent odour undulating through the building. I wasn't even sure if the place was inhabited at all. We snooped through the rooms, none of which were locked; some were full of mattresses, some sheets, one room had a

the Whistler Reservoir," he told me authoritatively. "After clearing British Columbia's largest reservoir, it was easier to just fill it up and forget about it than it would be to retrieve it from the bottom."

THAT EVENING, back at Chateau keto, the locals were cutting loose and drunks of all ages were wandering between rooms like frosh week on East Hastings. But these local groms hit the sack early, so upon our return from a drunken moonlit snowmobile ride, we were the only ones wandering. And, as per the request of the Powder King staff (we note that they asked), Keith the Santa sparked a Roman candle in the hallway. The place filled with smoke as I lit another to defend myself, blindly firing in his direction. Balls of fire ricocheted off the iron walls of the hotel. This type of activity is frowned upon within the village limits of Whistler, but at Powder King, every care is taken to ensure a quality visit. The fire alarms were disengaged to ensure our fun wasn't interrupted by sprinklers and high-pitched sirens.

Consistently deep powder, a laid-back crowd and affordable lift tickets and accommodations make Powder King one of my favourite destinations in Canadian snowboarding. It's out of the way, but that's why it's so affordable—and why it attracts such a good crowd. The King is worth the drive. ☺



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board tips

BY JAMES RADKE

Mogul hero

For some riders, moguls can be the most exciting part of the mountain.



fall lines

BY HART GOLBECK

Telemark-eting

The second annual Teleteli Festival—an event designed to promote telemark skiing among alpine skiers, telemark skiers and snowboarders—will take place at Marmot Basin on March 17-20. Participation costs \$70 and that includes discounted lift tickets, cheap hotels, entry to a host of racing events, clinics, a t-

For others, moguls are an intimidating and humbling experience. For everyone, they are physically demanding and technically challenging.

In a mogul run, it is sometimes possible to make most of the turns between and around the moguls. Other times, the rider makes turns on the sides or tops of the moguls. Most of the time, however, riders must choose a line and negotiate whatever they encounter.

When you're in a mogul field, the terrain determines when and where you can turn, so you always have to be looking one step ahead. Take things slowly and stay in control,

shirt and entertainment by Edmonton's First Aid Kit band. Check out www.albertatelemark.com for more information.

Washington slept here

Mount Washington on Vancouver Island is famous for its incredible snow dumps and deep powder conditions, but this year it's been unable to open since torrential rains drowned the hill in December. Even its Nordic tracks are closed. The best it can offer right now are scenic rides up the chairs and a bungee trampoline. (At least it has a sense of humour about its plight; its website now features a top 10 list of similarities between its unhappy situation and the cancelled NHL season.) Whistler managed to recover from these same rains, but a number of American resorts in Washington have been closed for months. We can only pray for a big winter blast, but most likely they're all done for the sea-

son because this is the start of spring skiing and the big melt at most of these destinations.

Death by snowboard

A 16-year-old snowboarder was charged with manslaughter last Monday after crashing into a skier at Jackson Hole Resort in Wyoming. The crash happened on an intermediate run where the snowboarder hit the skier from behind at an unusually high speed—the collision was forceful enough to break the snowboard in half and propel both participants 10 metres down the slope. The sheriff's report cited that the boarder had plenty of time and room to alter his trajectory, but instead continued on the path which resulted in the fatal collision. It will be interesting to follow this story because it may cause other resorts to institute stricter guidelines to prevent similar tragedies. □

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ski
tips

By COLIN CATHREA

There's corn in my crud

The Inuit people of the North are said to have dozens of different names for snow. Maybe it's because there's not a whole lot else to talk about on those long winter nights, or maybe it's because snow comes in so many varieties. Not to be outdone, we non-Eskimo types have come up with our own list of pet names for the white substance that we play on every winter and spring—some are simply geographical references like "Sierra Sludge" or "Utah Light" but they can also suggest the best way to ski it.

Snow comes in three basic categories—light, medium and heavy—which can then be broken down into a bewildering number of subcategories. For instance, you can have a relatively light corn snow with a windblown layer, or a thick wet heavy snow with an ice base. How we ski each of these conditions depends on factors like speed, turn radius and body position. I'm going to break down the techniques for skiing four types of "difficult" snows. Crust, windblown, corn and spring.

Crust

You've all probably arrived at a ski area several days after a huge dump and sadly imagined how great it was just a few days earlier as you make your first turns and feel the snow grabbing your skis and boots, wanting to toss you on our ass. Well that's just cruddy. Settled powder snow is crust. What was once a light 50 centimetres is now a heavy 20 centimetres. Couple that with all the old tracks criss-crossing the hill, and it can make for a tough run. These conditions will toss your body weight forward and back with ferocity. Your skis will slow dramatically, then release, sending you sitting back.

It's easy to tense up your entire body while skiing crust, which makes bending your knees for a good unweighting action more difficult. Contrary to your better judgment, try using a bit more speed here to elevate your skis out of the snow, making them easier to turn. Also, as in all "heavier" conditions, a more pronounced unweighting action is a necessity. Crashes rarely produce injuries, but your equipment can be dispersed for several square metres and make for great video.

Windblown

This is a result of snowfall accompanied by high winds, which often break up the snowflakes and pack them into a more compressed layer. The snow underneath is protected and can remain relatively light. When the crust becomes strong enough, you can

ride on top of the layer, but if you break through, it's usually tits-up.

If you find yourself gliding on top of windblown snow, go slow. Try to test the stability of the crust, keeping in mind that conditions can change as you move down the mountain. If you're unlucky enough to encounter a crust that keeps breaking below your skis, it's probably a good idea to traverse, stop, do a kick turn and traverse again. You may have to work your way down the entire pitch this way. I've taken my skis off and walked down entire sections in these conditions. When you fall, the crust can cut your skin. So to stop looking like a survivor of a slasher flick, be careful.

On the other hand, one of the most joyous conditions I've ever encountered occurs in the spring when the crust goes through a freeze-thaw cycle and remains intact. I call it "tabletop" and it's an incredible experience. Think of the most perfectly groomed run ever: an ultra-smooth layer of snow that's just begun to soften under the spring sun; a layer of crust thick enough to keep you from breaking through, but soft enough to carve beautiful turns. It's better than sex, I think.

Corn

This unique condition occurs when snowflakes partially melt and then re-freeze, rounding the flakes into more spherical shapes. It feels like millions of ball bearings beneath your skis. This is another "patience snow" that requires you to slow your movements and do more unweighting. It can be challenging, but a whole lot of fun.

Spring conditions

When the weather alternates between freezing and thawing temperatures, snow keeps changing from slush to ice. When I go spring skiing, I don't like to get to the hill for first run. The snow is usually hard as a rock, and the intense vibrations feel like they're dislodging my dental fillings. I like to wait for that perfect time of the day when the snow softens and groomed skating rinks become beautiful carpets of carving heaven. My recommendation: when this time of day rolls around, ski your butt off. Stop for food later. And most important of all: when the snow gets real heavy at the end of the day and you're tired, be very careful. More injuries occur at this time of day than any other part of the ski season. Tired skiers and heavy, wet snow make for slow, twisting falls that injure tendons, ligaments and bones—and slowing down will not keep you out of harm's way.

Now, don't get me wrong here. I love to blow apart soft, slushy bumps and carve six-inch divots into the hills as much as the next guy. But it's when you let your guard down as you're just putting along that that unexpected bog of snow can toss you down. Be aware you are tiring and quit while the quitting's good.

Don't let bad snow conditions ruin your day. If you change your skiing technique to meet the snow you can have a great day. From ice to slush, powder to crust, you can tame them all. ☺



The EASYRIDER Condition Report

LOCAL

Rabbit Hill - 60cm base, all lifts and runs open
Snow Valley - 60cm base, all lifts and runs open

ALBERTA

Castle Mtn - 35 - 175cm base, 10 runs open
Can. Olympic Park - 90cm base, all lifts scheduled
Lake Louise - 162cm base, 10 lifts and 109 runs open
Marmot Basin - 108 - 125cm base, all main lifts and 84 runs open
Mt. Norquay - 110 - 185cm base, 5 lifts and 28 runs open
Nakiska - 50 - 100cm base, 5 lifts and 28 runs open
Pass Powderkeg - 80cm base, 3 lifts open
Sunshine - 150cm base, 12 lifts and 107 runs open
Tawatinaw - conditions are good, 17' superpipe open

B.C.

Apex - 110cm base, 61 runs and 3 lifts open
Big White - 170cm base, 15 lifts and 111 runs open
Fernie - 172cm base, 10 lifts and 98 runs open
Fairmont - 100% of terrain open, excellent conditions
Kicking Horse - 149cm base, 100% of terrain open
Kimberley - 69cm base, 6 lifts, 46 runs and halfpipe open
Mt. Washington - Closed until further notice
Panorama - 39cm base, 9 lifts and 90 runs and bowls open
Powder King - 150 - 420cm base, 24 runs and 2 lifts
Powder Springs - 100 - 200cm base, all lifts open
Red Mtn - 136cm base
Silver Star - 172cm base, 10 lifts and 97 runs open
Sun Peaks - 128cm base, 10 lifts and 110 runs open
Whistler Blackcomb - 143cm base, 3cm new snow, terrain park open
Whitewater - 174cm base, 1cm new snow, spring conditions

USA

Big Mtn - 27 - 152cm base, 6 lifts and 84 runs open, extended hours in effect
Big Sky - 97 - 147cm base, 2cm new snow, 100% of terrain open
Crystal Mtn - 142cm base, 100% of terrain open
49 Degrees - 25 - 115cm base, 4cm new snow, open sat. and sun. only until further notice
Great Divide Ski Area - 30-75cm base, 9 runs open
Lookout Pass - 47 - 105cm base, spring conditions exist
Mt. Spokane - Closed until further notice
Schweitzer Mtn - 22 - 140cm base, 4 lifts and 22 runs open, spring conditions exist
Silver Mtn - 52 - 105cm base, 1cm new snow, 7 lifts and 46 runs open
Sun Valley - 102 - 150cm base



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The children's crusade

I won the struggle to incorporate my kids into my skiing hobby by following seven simple rules

BY STEVEN THRENDYLE

Way back when, my friend Tim chillingly foretold the future when he told me, "Never confuse skiing with your kids with going skiing." I'd borne witness to enough toddler meltdowns in the parking lot or at ski school to know that he was speaking the truth. And as an expectant father, I was resigned to the idea that skiing would be yet another thing that would "never be the same" once we had kids.

That seems like a lifetime ago. Now, with our son and daughter—ages five and seven—our family is lucky to be able to ski at Big White and Silver Star on a regular basis. Over the past four winters, our kids' skiing experience has been varied, to say the least. They took their first lessons on a T-bar hill on Mount Washington, and were in an excellent "Home Hardware" program at Apex in Penticton for a full season. You'll know where Grandfather's Run gets its name when you're skiing with a four-year-old—basically, it takes so long to ski that you'll be old enough to be a grandfather by the time you're finished! Since moving to Kelowna, we've learned numerous lessons from the fabulous teaching staff at Big White, where both kids got the message that it's okay to turn occasionally. As they get older, I'm sure they'll want to move on and hit bigger mountains like Whistler-Blackcomb, Panorama, Fernie and Kicking Horse, not to mention B.C. resorts' many terrain parks. (Cameron is already eyeing up Big White's mini-rails.) Along the way, we've learned some lessons ourselves about how to stay sane and enjoy family ski trips.

(1) Ski schools that specialize in kids programs

The Canadian Ski Instructors Alliance has a grading system so that your kids will be put into the proper class. Many ski schools offer flexible pricing and lesson-time options to work around your schedule. Lessons can often be combined with daycare spaces to free up more time during the day. On Blackcomb Mountain, the Solar Coaster chari-zone has a kid's adventure area with trails and tunnels in gladed trees and animated characters. The Adventure Castle is at the centre and has slides and other diversions. Imagine kids' delight when they discover Whistler Mountain's tree forts; located between Bear Cub and Pony Trail novice teaching areas, they can be reached by an off-the-run tunnel. And remember: just because a resort caters to families doesn't mean that experts should be



ignored. For example, Silver Star offers great kids' programs, yet has double black diamond trails galore. Ditto for Fernie Alpine Resort, Panorama and Sun Peaks.

(2) "Ski to/from" lodging will eliminate at least a half-hour of hassle from your day

Even if it's a bit pricier (although often it's not), the flexibility of on-slope accommodation will pay you back in spades. It's so convenient to be able to ski down to your unit to eat lunch or change clothes. Most families also prefer condominiums to hotel rooms so that they can eat in and save money. At Whistler, the Legends at the refurbished Creekside base area is a new suite-style lodge that is geared to families. There's an

FAMILIES

on-site Lego room for guests' kids to enjoy, and the accommodations are complemented by slopeside retail and ski and snowboard rental shops (including kids' equipment) and restaurants

(3) Check the minimum age for daycare

Many resorts are not licensed to take babies; indeed, 18 months is more often the norm. Silver Star is one of the few that's licensed for newborns. Also, immunization papers are sometimes a requirement for all licensed facilities—make sure you ask about it when you're researching resorts. Ask if there are babysitters available who will look after the kids once the lifts shut down so that you can enjoy a quiet drink or romantic dinner together. Many resorts have nightly programs (movie and pizza nights, as one fun example) where your children can be supervised and even fed a kid-friendly dinner. Panorama's Wee Wascals Day Care offers arts and crafts night on Mondays and Thursdays from 7-9 p.m. for kids between 7 and 12.

(4) Look for resort activities that go on after the last lift

Many resorts offer fun activities like bingo or casino nights, snow tubing, ice skating or night skiing. Individual properties often have programs that include pond skating, snowshoeing, cross country, children's contests and evening bonfires. To maintain peace in the family (and keep everyone co-ordinated), consider buying a pair of those inexpensive FRS walkie-talkies to keep in touch while on the slopes. (After all, FRS stands for "Family Radio Service.")

(5) Hit your local hills

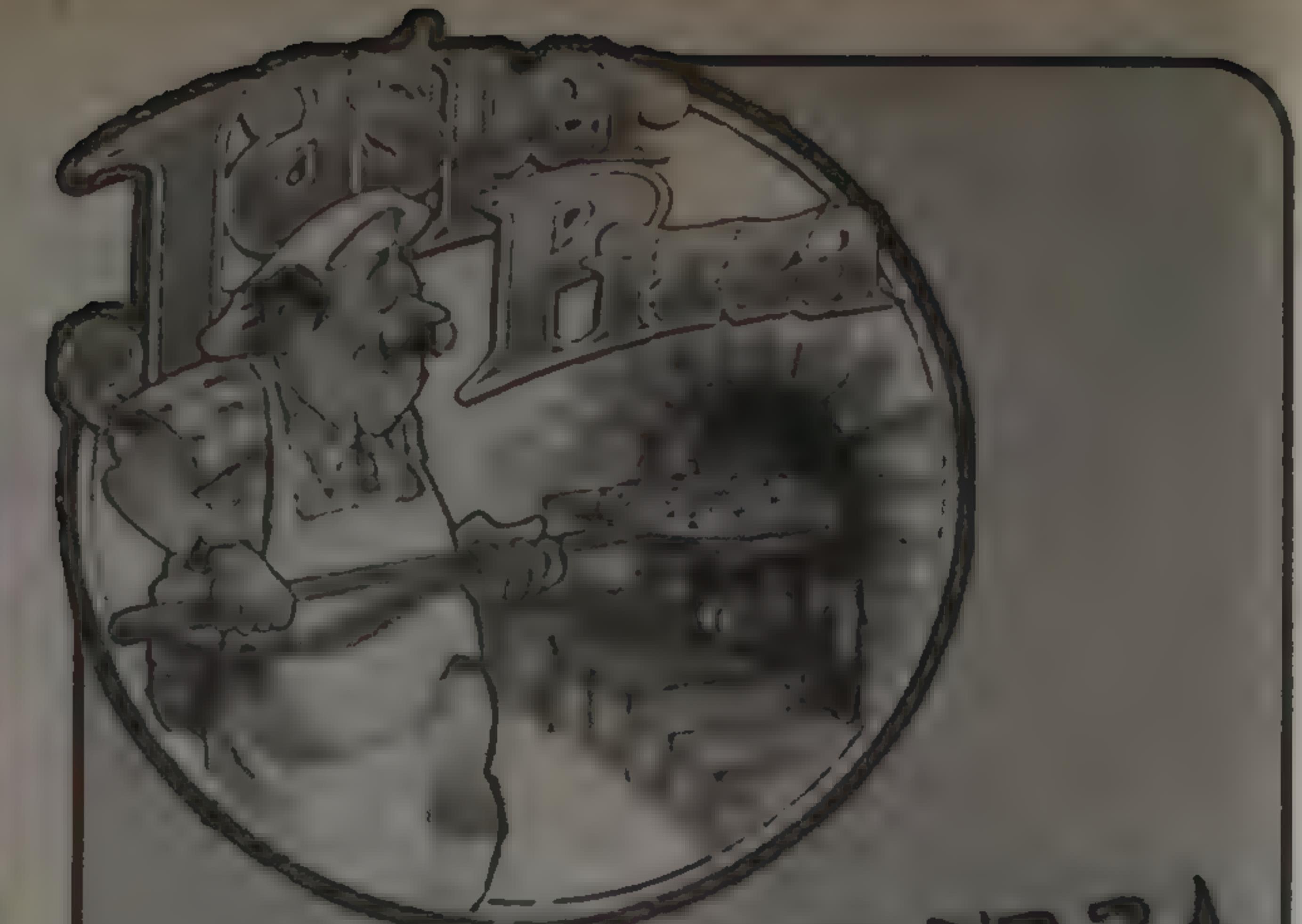
For at least the first few lessons, you'll likely be rotating between daycare and the ski school, or even babysitting the kids yourself in the cafeteria or brown-bag room.

(6) New School rules for tweens and teens

Nothing will put a smile on the face of a sullen teenager like telling them you're going to a resort with a top-notch terrain park and halfpipe. Though the cranked-up music might scare parents off into the woods, terrain parks are hugely popular with snowboarders and New School skiers. Progressive resorts offer introductory lessons and all parks have a grading system so that neophytes don't get in over their heads. And finally...

(7) Take lots of photos and video

And bring fresh batteries for cold-weather filming! You won't want to miss your kids making those first few turns! ☺



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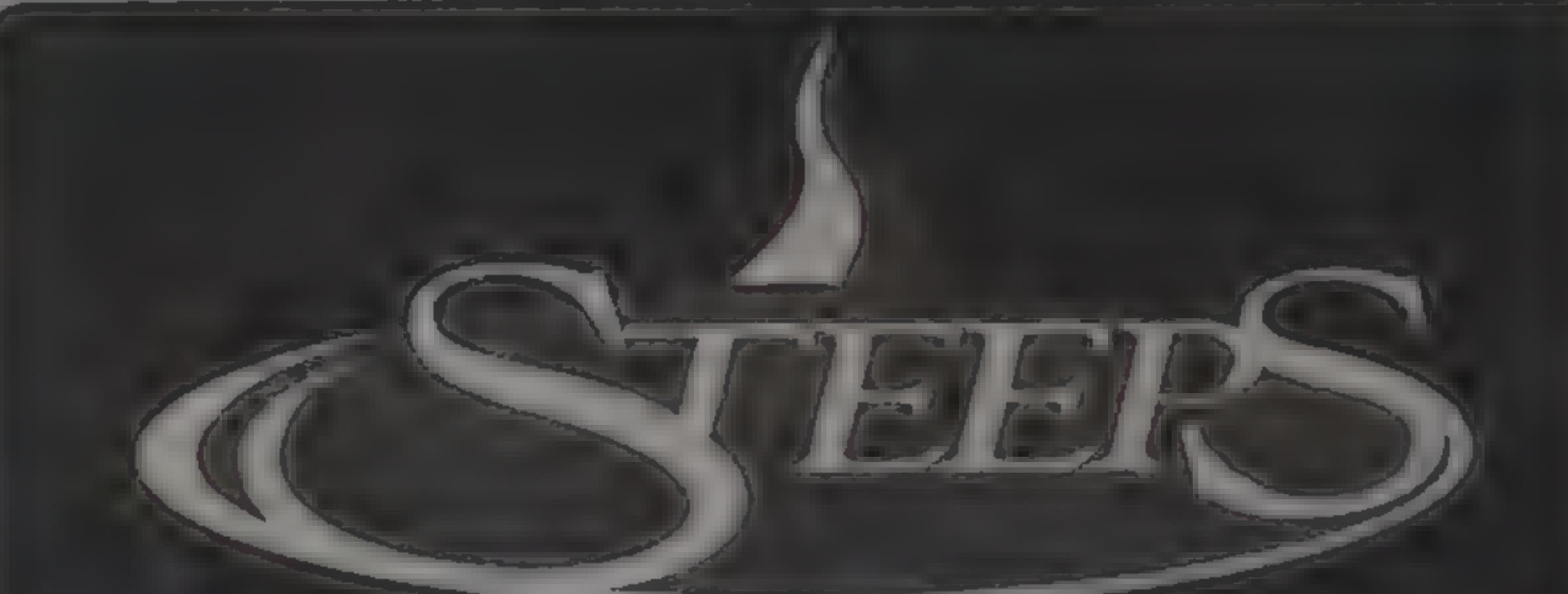
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Zuppa troopers

Café's decor isn't much to speak of, but your mouth will be too full of tasty giant salads to complain

BY IAIN ILICH

With a Grandin LRT entrance only metres from the door, getting to Zuppa is certainly easy. Across the tree-lined street, visible from the restaurant's window, is the beautiful old brick Grandin Elementary School, built in 1914. The contrast between the school and the towering apartments surrounding it is obvious, but it still feels right. In fact, Grandin is one of the few areas in Edmonton where it feels like you're walking through a real, honest-to-goodness urban residential space, where highrises and pedestrian-friendly side streets have replaced the droning monotony of the suburbs.

So, the neighbourhood might be nice, but what about inside the

restaurant? Well, with all the tables covered with oversized sheets of cheap vinyl, chairs that are about as utilitarian as you can get, and an overall air of unfinished decorating, let's just say Zuppa's decor leaves something to be desired. In fact, I've enjoyed Klondike breakfasts in school gymnasiums with more character, and that made me kind of sad. Zuppa isn't at all run-down or anything; it just looks like nobody had even thought to liven things up a

CAFE

bit. There are some paintings on the walls, sure, but other than that, the place looks sterile. Too bad.

Ordering takes place at the counter, where the menu is spread across two whiteboards. They have a breakfast section (looks interesting enough), and a lunch section (looks quite promising), with just enough selection in each to satisfy vegetarians and carnivores alike. The word "organic" appears more than once amongst the selections, from their organic Kicking Horse Coffee (which you can enjoy with organic sugar, apparently), to their organic Happy

Planet fruit juices. The menu choices are distinctly healthy, but not in a fun-hating, joyless militant vegan sort of way.

Since my wife and I had arrived for a late afternoon lunch, we were both hungry, and looking for something to fill us up but not pack us too tight. My wife ordered a plate of Leo's Caesar Salad topped with a chargrilled chicken breast (\$7), which she was quite enthusiastic about. I went for the Italian Grill (\$6), a grilled focaccia sandwich filled with ham, capicolla and melted mozzarella. "Zuppa" is Italian for soup, and since I figured any place named after an item on their menu must take said item quite seriously, I decided to add a bowl of their soup of the day (\$2 extra)—in this case, a chicken cauliflower concoction—to my order. To drink, we picked a couple of tiny bottles of Happy Planet juice, my wife opting for the mango smoothie (\$3.50), while I went for the blueberry juice (\$2.75).

WE PAID FOR OUR ORDER, took our seats and cracked open our bottles of expensive hippie juice. My wife's mango smoothie was rife with the ripe, sweet mango flavour that she regularly complains about not being able to find in the second-rate mangoes that Canadian supermarkets all seem to carry. Consequently she had almost drained the entire bottle within a minute. One sip of my blueberry "iced tea cooler" and I was immediately transported back to memories of Lac St. Jean, Quebec, a region so renowned for its blueberries that its inhabitants are lovingly known throughout the province as *les bleus*. The freshness of the juice was astounding, and I had to struggle to keep from following my wife's example.

When our food arrived, we couldn't get over the size of the helpings. My wife's salad was piled high on her plate, a mountain of greenery that even Sir Edmund Hillary himself would have had trouble climbing. Spread out on the summit was the grilled chicken breast, with black charcoal lines to prove that it had indeed seen a real grill at some point. My wife's reaction was one of awe. She loved the chicken, which she thought was perfectly done, and quite enjoyed the Caesar salad, though the pita chip croutons sort of weirded her out.

While my wife may have loved her chicken salad, she was even more impressed by my Italian grill. The focaccia was soft and fresh, the meat and cheese filling more than ample. The side salad, which I wasn't expecting with the dish, was a very pleasant surprise. Served cold, the marinated cabbage, onion and carrot, seasoned with oregano and sprigs of fresh parsley, formed a lovely union of tastes that complemented the sandwich perfectly.

More than anything, I was anxious to try out the chicken cauliflower soup. The bowl was a generous size for the extra two bucks, and the quality was in keeping with the rest of the meal. Like the café's interior, it wasn't much to look at but it was absolutely delicious, with a thick broth, plenty of cauliflower florets and giant chunks of so-tender-it-



falls-apart-in-your-mouth chicken, so large that I could even see the telltale black marks from the grill.

The meal left us feeling full but still light and full of energy, unlike the usual post-lunch lethargy

prompted by a good, hearty meal. For the price—a little under \$23 including tax—we ate well, and thoroughly enjoyed the food. If they do something about the daycare-style tablecloths, I can see Zuppa becom-

ing one of my favourite lunch options on either side of the High Level Bridge.

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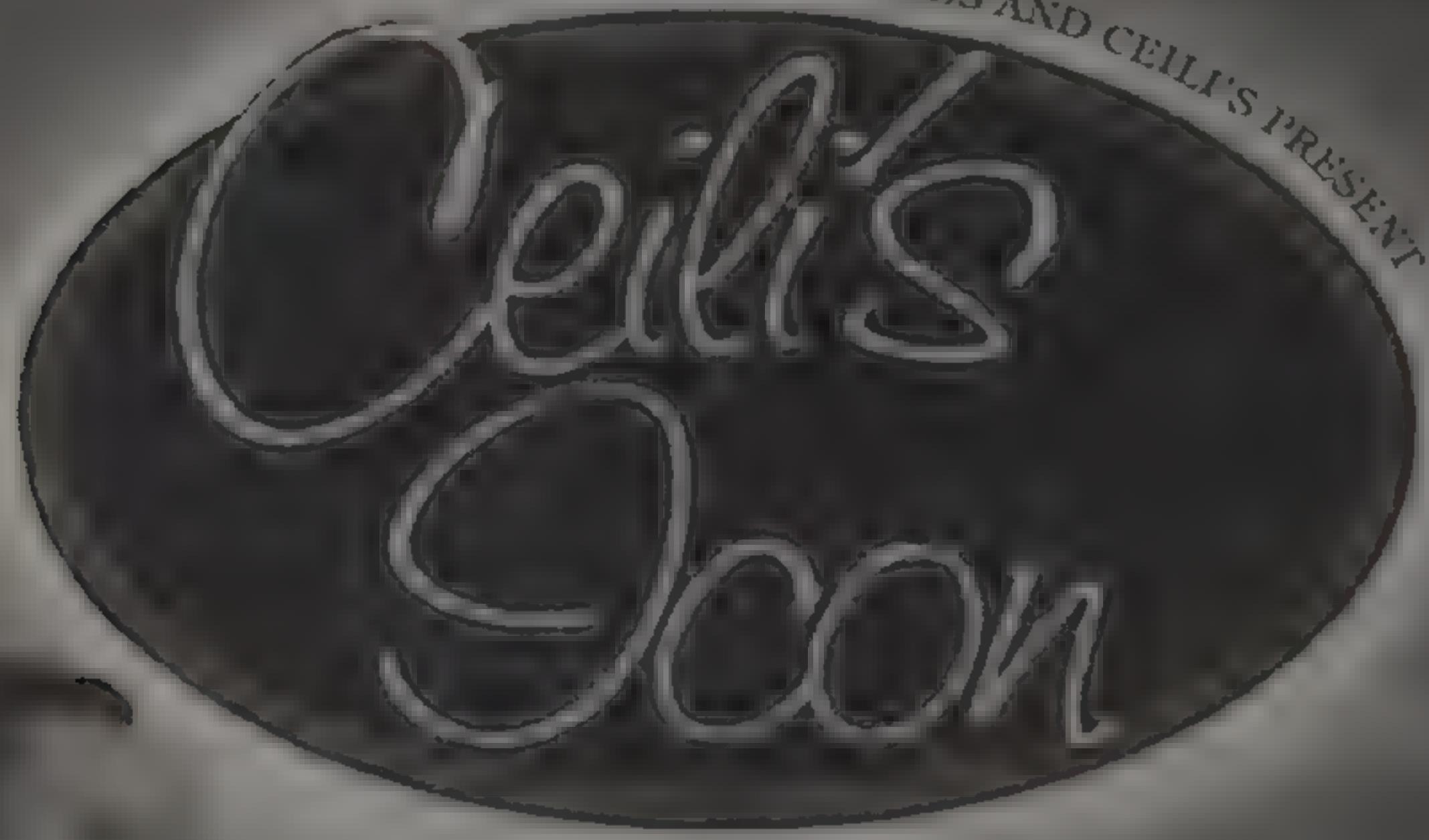


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Hake, rattle and roll

I happily braved Brits' thickly battered cuisine, but my heart lacked the courage to tackle the haggis

BY CHRISTOPHER THRALL

English culture has a bloody history of warfare and siege, and weapons of war and mighty stone battlements fuelled the rise of British politics, art, geography and cuisine. Enormous pots of boiling oil prepared for a castle's defense became communal cooking sites as troops dipped their rations in a bowl of batter before tossing them in and grab-

bing the tongs to retrieve their pot luck morsel. ("They're attacking! Ready the oil!" "But the halibut is nearly done....")

Today, British cuisine in Edmonton comes to full fruition at Brits Fish and Chips. My wife and I had our doubts as we drove up to the little strip mall restaurant on a Friday

FISH'N'CHIPS

evening. An Olde English Inn façade made me wary, as did the door painted up like a London phone booth. Still, we could see bustling crowds inside and noted that the parking lot was nearly overflowing, so my wife convinced me to give it a chance.

Upon entering, I quickly realized was that Brits wasn't a typical British

theme restaurant, of the sort done so badly elsewhere in the city; rather the authentic details and scary-sounding fare were obviously a labour of love. The only thing (conspicuously) missing was the Royals memorabilia; otherwise the decor was complete with a full set of English banners and knickknacks.

The menu listed some intriguing dishes, including steak and kidney pie, white pudding and a heart-punching entrée called "deep-fried pizza." I was nowhere near brave enough to try haggis and I could feel my arteries harden as I considered the battered sausages. As well, you could select a skate wing and "hake" or "huss" individually—these are apparently fish of some sort. While we could have tried something adventurous (all of the prices loitered near the frugal end of the



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each is always nice), we had coleslaw and fish and chips, so fish and chips it would be.

My wife selected the sole two-piece full meal deal (\$10.60) with coleslaw and a ginseng tea while I chose the turbot (\$12.40) with a tea and pickled egg. (I went with turbot only to show patriotic support for Newfoundland's victory over the Spanish in the Turbot War of 1995. It's our fish by military might!) And just in case we weren't entirely saturated by the end of the meal, we ordered deep-fried pineapple rings (\$2.00) for dessert. While we were ordering, I was somewhat relieved to see prominently displayed, the declaration that Brits uses no trans fats or MSG—yep, only healthy deep-frying on here.

I GAVE MY NAME to the friendly staff and found seats in the packed dining area, which was a boisterous multi-generational fun zone where you could take a date, your kid or your grandmother without trepidation. Sipping our ginseng tea, which had a strangely appealing vegetable flavour, we awaited our feasts. When my name was called, I waved over the jovial server who made instant friends with our 10-month-old daughter. After setting down baskets overflowing with piping hot morsels and cooing at the munchkin, she disappeared and we heartily dug in.

I delighted in the crunch of thick batter and the hot, succulent fillets within. A perfect complement, the fries were crisp and tasty. My first-ever pickled egg had a dark, beery flavour from the malt vinegar that got a little strong by the end. Both my wife and I abandoned utensils about halfway through our first pieces of fish. After sampling my turbot, my wife asked in a whisper, "If I can't tell the difference, does that make me a bad person?" Her coleslaw was fresh and crisp, sharing with the lemon wedges the dubious distinction of being the healthiest items on the table.

Seriously, one piece of fish would have been enough, but through



sheer determination, my bride was able to devour both pieces, though she left most of her chips behind. I managed to get about two-thirds of the way through both, and declined the server's offer to box the rest up for me. My inner masochist was looking forward to dessert! Looking like flattened onion rings floating in a pool of melted toffee, the pineapple slices were quickly delivered to our delight. I carved a piece with my fork—hot—and, after burning myself, savoured the sweet, crispy fruit combination.

On our way out, we tossed our tip into the jar on the counter, bringing our unhydrogenated total to just over \$30. Next time, I promised myself some more adventurous fare and a pint of bitter, but until then, just imagine how British cuisine would have evolved if castle defenders had used red-hot sand or trained attack bats instead of boiling oil: a trip to Brits Dry Roasted Bat Shop might have been quite scary indeed. ☺

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Folky deeds done dirt cheap

Jeremy Fisher's *Let It Shine* shows few traces of folksinger's AC/DC-loving youth

BY LEAH COLLINS

Despite having made his mark with his laid-back, folk-inspired warbling, singer/songwriter Jeremy Fisher still occasionally dreams of having righteous rock chops. "There is definitely a part of me that would love to be asked to play in an AC/DC tribute band," he admits, chuckling over the phone from his mother's home in Hamilton, Ontario.

Fisher's little hard-rock reverie, however, will have to wait to be realized; he's too busy these days touring to promote his major-label debut, *Let It Shine*, a collection of countrified, semi-autobiographical pop ballads. And while Fisher isn't likely to be caught singing "Highway to Hell" as he treks across the country, he says that one of his prouder recent moments was a bit of a tribute to his favourite Australian rock icons.

During an interview on a Victoria TV station's morning show, Fisher had the inspiration to instruct the host in the intricacies of Angus Young's hyperactive-schoolboy dance moves. "It was before I had a good strong cup of coffee, so it seemed like a good idea," he jokes. "But I was really flattered because apparently they spliced in bits of the 'Thunderstruck' video. So if that's the closest I ever get to appearing on TV with

Angus Young, I'm satisfied with that," he says with a shy chuckle.

Fisher laughs when looking back on his "duet" with Angus, but he takes AC/DC's influence on his musical career quite seriously. "For the first couple of years in high school, I listened exclusively to AC/DC, and I had no interest in anything else," he

PREVIEW **FOLK**
says. "I still listen to AC/DC a lot; they're a big influence on me. But you know, I went through a guitar-rock phase where I was listening to a lot of Van Halen and Rush and Led Zeppelin and stuff like that. That was the foundation; that's what got me excited about music. That's when I started playing guitar."

FISHER ACKNOWLEDGES THAT HIS rock roots aren't really that prevalent in his music today. His memories of his rock 'n' roll high school days, however, are still very much with him; several songs on *Let It Shine* tap into his teenage experience, a fact that Fisher attributes to his reflective songwriting approach. "I think that experience really has to sink in and you have to wait a while before you can look back on it with a different perspective," he says. "I think all our lives we go back to childhood and certain things. It may not become more honest or more true or more clear, but different things are revealed. The more you learn, the more you grow, the more you age, the more you learn about human nature and

figure certain things out that might have been going on in your head at that time. So for me, I find it more interesting to write about these experiences later in life because it allows that perspective."

While his lyrics might be grounded in the memories of days past, Fisher says his sound is definitely a product of his immediate needs as a lone traveling musician. He honed his skills busking the streets of Seattle and, over the past four years, touring North America by bicycle. On such expeditions, toting fancy equipment (or even band members) just wasn't feasible. "I found when I was left with my acoustic guitar that a lot of that kind of [classic rock] stuff that I had been playing and singing wasn't very interesting," he says. "So I started to get into folk music and really got into the stories and that sort of tradition. It was really natural."

The wandering troubadour lifestyle clearly has a lasting appeal for Fisher, who treasures the simplicity of stripping a performance down to the essentials of a storytelling voice and a guitar. And even though that might mean he'll never get to share a stage with Angus Young outside of the odd video cut-up job, he's smitten by the charms of a folky lifestyle. "That lifestyle is just—the simplicity of it lends itself better to the acoustic guitar and folk music than it does to, you know, hair rock," he laughs. **v**

JEREMY FISHER

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One conversation about 13 things

Electric
Frankenstein hauls
out the big guns for
their monster 13th
studio album

BY PHIL DUPERRON

Playing a brand of brash, loud Rock 'n' roll that guitarist Sal Canzonieri describes as "AC/DC meets the Dead Boys," Electric Frankenstein have been slogging it out in the underground for 13 years now without ever "making it big." But considering that their songs have appeared on more than 100 recordings around the world, and Dark Horse Books just released a book of album covers and posters drawn for the band by artists like Coop, the Pizz and Dirty Donny, it's not like Electric Frankenstein are a bunch of slouches, either.

According to Canzonieri, the band has turned down plenty of offers from the majors, preferring to work with more artist-friendly labels like Junk Records and TKO Records, where success is measured by more than just the number of units sold. "I never wanted to be one of these billion-selling things that played in stadiums," Canzonieri says. "To be at that level, you're playing for people that you don't even like, you're playing for people that don't like you; they're only there because they think they're supposed to be there. That's never going to get you satisfaction. I feel way more satisfied when I walk into a club and it's packed and everyone there knows my songs and knows why they're there. Maybe they came on the recommendation of somebody else, but

they didn't come because it was the cool thing to do."

Electric Frankenstein has just released *We Will Bury You!*, a double-disc collection of wicked cover songs recorded over the last decade, as well as a couple reissues of older, out-of-print albums and their 13th EP, *Super Cool*, an assortment of odds and ends that never made the first cut. But the best is yet to come—since the band's members are fans of campy horror, the number 13 holds a special significance for them,



which means they've worked particularly hard on their 13th studio album, *Burn Bright, Burn Fast*, due out in April. "That's the big, giant thing we've spent the last few years working on," Canzonieri says, "and I did a lot of things that have never been done before for this record."

Instead of finding a label to front the cash to record their magnum opus, Electric Frankenstein treated the project like an independent horror film and sought out like-minded backers who knew Canzonieri was serious about his vision and could pull it off. With \$25,000 in their pocket, the band knew it was time to flick the switch on this monster. "Because we had so much money," Canzonieri says, "I got a really great deal at a big, huge studio and we recorded, like, 56 tracks. There's, like, 20 guitar tracks and 30 drum tracks, so it's a giant-sounding punk record. We didn't do it slick; we did it the total opposite. We made it sound huge, as if Led Zeppelin was a punk band, but left it raw and powerful."

Flying completely in the face of convention, they've also deliberately

been leaving their best songs unreleased—until now. "Every time we recorded an album," Canzonieri says, "we left off the best song and we kept them all for the 13th album."

IN WORKING WITH Electric Frankenstein and putting out the successful *Fist Full of Rock 'n' Roll* compilations, Canzonieri has seen his share of great bands wallow in obscurity while pretty boys and girls with questionable talent prosper. But the worst, he says, has been seeing the snarling, ugly beast known as punk rock get its balls lopped off and resold as a safe alternative to the mainstream by bands like Good Charlotte and their misbegotten ilk. "Why do they say they're punk?" he asks. "They dress like cartoons of punk and then they sound like the Knack. It's just pop music—that's what major labels have to sell. They repackage it and shove it in your face as something else, and I see a giant backlash against punk and rock because of those bands. There's a lot of fanzines and things saying, 'I hate rock and I hate punk' and they only want to listen to noise music and stuff like that."

"And why?" he continues. "Because they were inundated with that garbage and that's what they think punk and rock is about. [The big labels] have usurped the title; they stole it, and that's why we stopped even calling ourselves that. We started just saying we're rock because those bands have ruined it for punk for good. Sure, there're people who know better—the record collectors and the critics—but that's preaching to the converted." □

ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN
With Black Market Inc. and Down for
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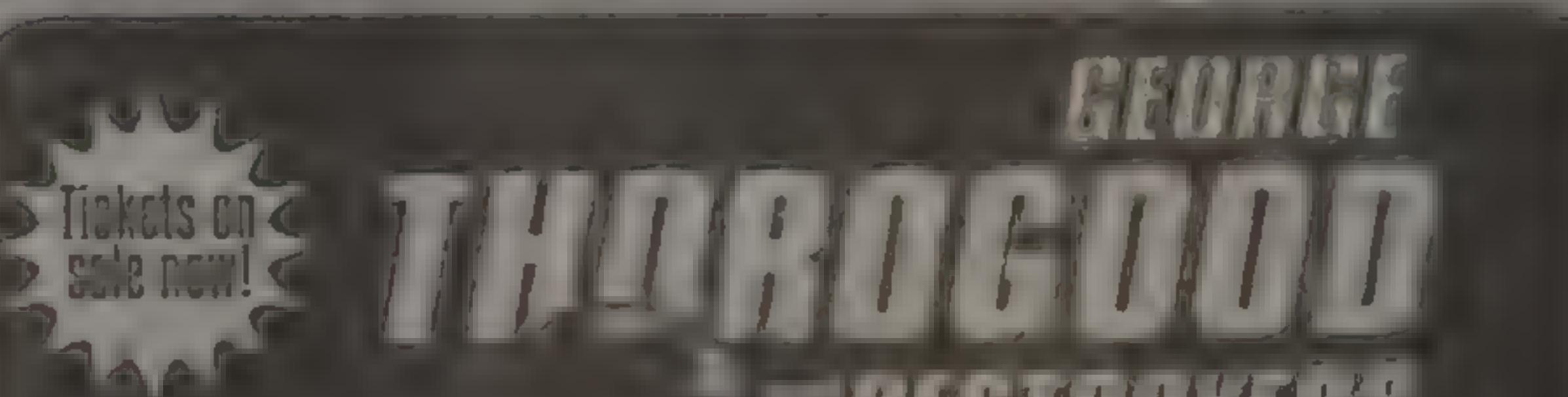
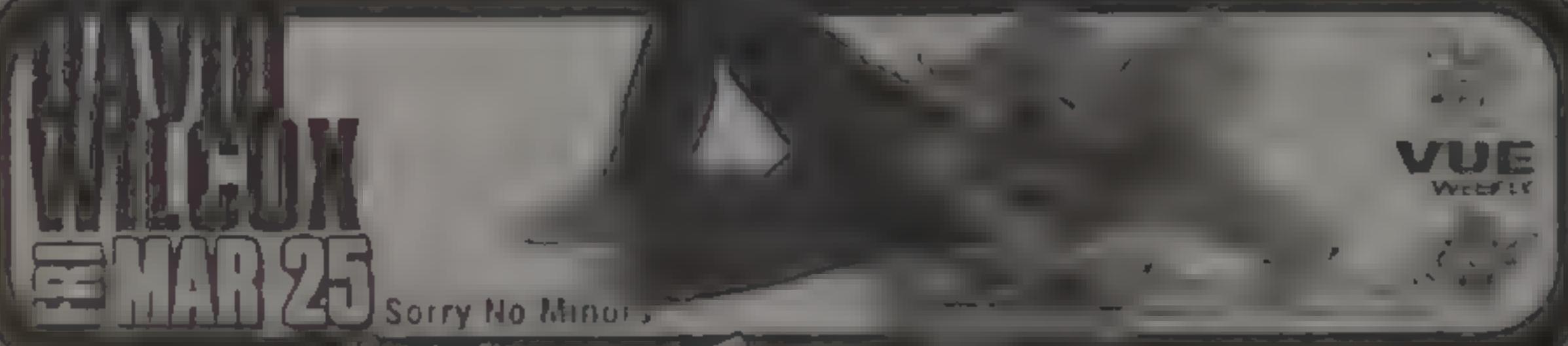
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MUSIC



music notes

BY PHIL DUPERRON
AND LEAH COLLINS

Litterbug waltz

Litterbug • With Fosters & McGarvey and the Golden Ape • Seedy's • Fri, Mar 4 As their name suggests, local folk-rockers Litterbug have sneaked onto the musical landscape and left little piles of stuff wherever they go—but unlike real litterbugs, this stuff is worth picking up and keeping.

Kaiser, their followup to their 2002

debut disc, *Pablo* (released on their own Monkey Bars Records label), gained number-one status on CJSR last week and has been getting airplay across the country. Obviously, the band realizes getting played on community radio isn't a one-way ticket to fame and glory, but as multi-instrumentalist Marc Simao points out, that's what makes it so cool in the first place. "It's nice to know that people we don't know are listening to it and liking it," Simao says. "We don't look at it as a band that's gonna have the kind of success as, say, a Nickelback, that kind of Bear corporate-rock thing. I mean we're making music because we like to, and if people dig it, that's kind of like a bonus. I think people who listen to CJSR or CKUA are actually looking to listen to something they haven't heard before."

And while *Kaiser* was off getting printed, it seems the five members of Litterbug just couldn't sit still, as they used the downtime to record *Hollis*, a

supposedly Christmas-themed EP that really isn't about Christmas at all. Like all their discs, *Hollis* was named after one of their cats and features a furry feline on the cover. "Essentially, the cats made the covers because in today's market you really need something cute, attractive and beautiful on the cover, right?" Simao says. "We could put ourselves there, but the cats are so much cuter. And there's still plenty of cats. By the time we run out of the current cats there'll probably be more cats or maybe dogs or ferrets even—who knows?" (PD)

Halls monitor

The Fates • With Madisen and Andy White with Allison Russell • Sldetrack Café • Thu, Mar 10 (8pm) Over the phone from Calgary, Lin Elder sounds like she could use a cough drop. Her spunky voice is a little raspy—but even if it weren't, Elder would accept an offer of a mentholat-

FRI MARCH 4 **LITTERBUG, \$1**
FOSTERS & MCGARVEY
AND THE GOLDEN APE

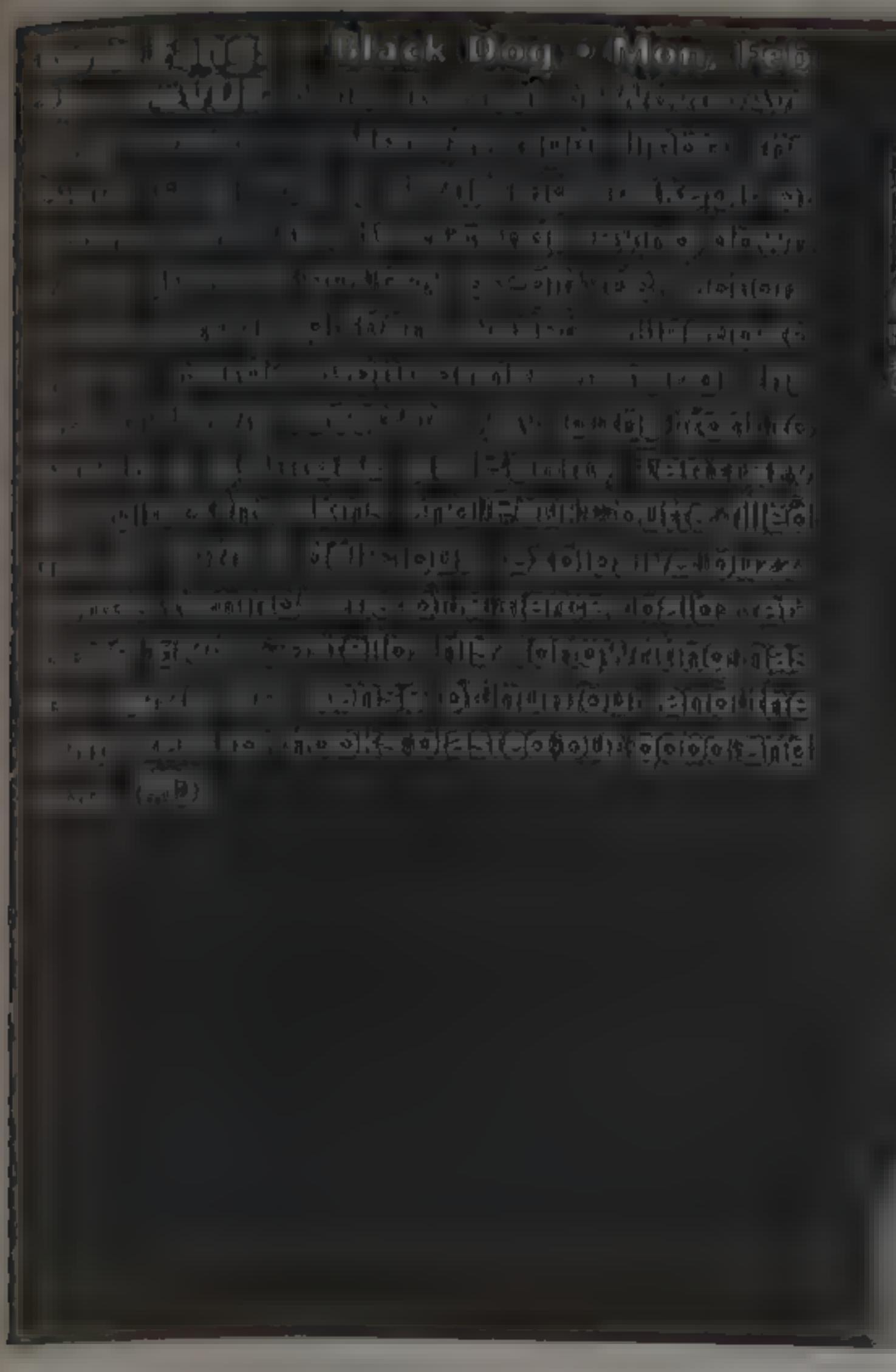
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ed candy in an instant.

You see, Elder's an admitted addict—at least where cherry-flavoured Halls are concerned (she'll partake of the spearmint variety too, but only in desperate situations). "I'm a pack-a-day girl," she says. "I just love the way they taste. I've been munching on those things for a couple of years now, I figure. I buy them like candy and I eat them like candy. But I suppose it's not very good for you; I'm sure there's some kind of medicine in there."

But that hasn't stopped Elder from making Halls junkies of the other members of her band, jazzy alt-pop vocal trio the Fates. The group is delighted to receive packages of the medicinal treats from their manager, and they've even requested the things for their dressing rooms. ("I was being a bit of a prima donna-slash-diva, I suppose," Elder concedes.)

But Elder's remorseless about the spreading her addiction; it's bailed her out of many a panicked case of withdrawal. "I was in my vehicle and I didn't have any money on me for whatever reason—I didn't have my bank card, I didn't have anything. And honest to God, I felt like I was jonesing for Halls—like almost to a point where I was ripping my car apart," she says. "Look, there's gotta be, there's gotta be a loonie, there's gotta be Halls stashed in my console." I was freaking out over it. It was like dying for a cigarette, but I was dying for a Halls." Her jangled nerves were soothed, though, when Elder happened upon one of her bandmates. "That's one thing you can always count on; somebody's going to have some, somewhere," she says. "It's kind of neat to know."

Elder's not sure how or why this cherry-flavoured madness all began, but she admits it doesn't take much to get her hooked on something. And if there's one habit that she finds harder to shake than an exceptional craving for throat lozenges, it's music—not that she hasn't tried to break the habit. "I'd been performing for so many years and I thought, 'Oh, I've got to grow up and make a living,'" she says. After years of working with Jann Arden and trying her hand at multiple projects, Elder "grew up" and became a real-estate agent—a job she still juggles with the Fates' touring schedule.

And while she'll occasionally put real estate on hold (even ignoring the "Winnie the Pooh" ring of her business cell while she chats), she can't turn away from music. "I thought maybe enough is enough, but hard as I tried, I can't do it," she says. "I don't know why, to tell you the truth; it's just that I've tried to quit before but I can't seem to do it."

And the progress she's been making with the Fates has only made quitting harder. She's excited about the chemistry between her and bandmates Lori Reid and Jenny Allen, and the group's music has begun to catch on with audiences. (Elder proudly reports that their record *Til We Have Faces* has hit the top of the charts on Saskatchewan college radio.) Sometimes, it seems, habits aren't meant to be broken. (LC)

Austin translation

Alberta Bound for Austin • With Ann Vriend, Joanne & Haley Myrol, Samantha King, Shuyler Jansen and Shawn Jonasson • **Festival Place** • Mon, Mar 7 Every year, hundreds of artists descend upon Austin, Texas for the massive arts and music convention known as South by Southwest, where musicians and filmmakers put their wares on display in hopes industry types will take notice and help their careers along. This year, Alberta will be represented by an unprecedented number of artists, thanks in part to Chris Martin and Marlene D'Aoust, who've organized an afternoon party for several Albertan singer-songwriters to strut their stuff before the Austin throngs. And even though they've received a grant from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, they still need a few bucks to cover the costs of getting everyone down there and to pay for the necessary space, equipment, technicians and backup musicians—so they're holding a fundraiser.

Local pianist Ann Vriend is one of those prairie performers. She's newly returned from Australia, where she and three other Alberta musicians played a week-long showcase to highlight the province's talent and centennial celebration on the international stage. And although she's still reeling from that whirlwind engagement, she's ready for

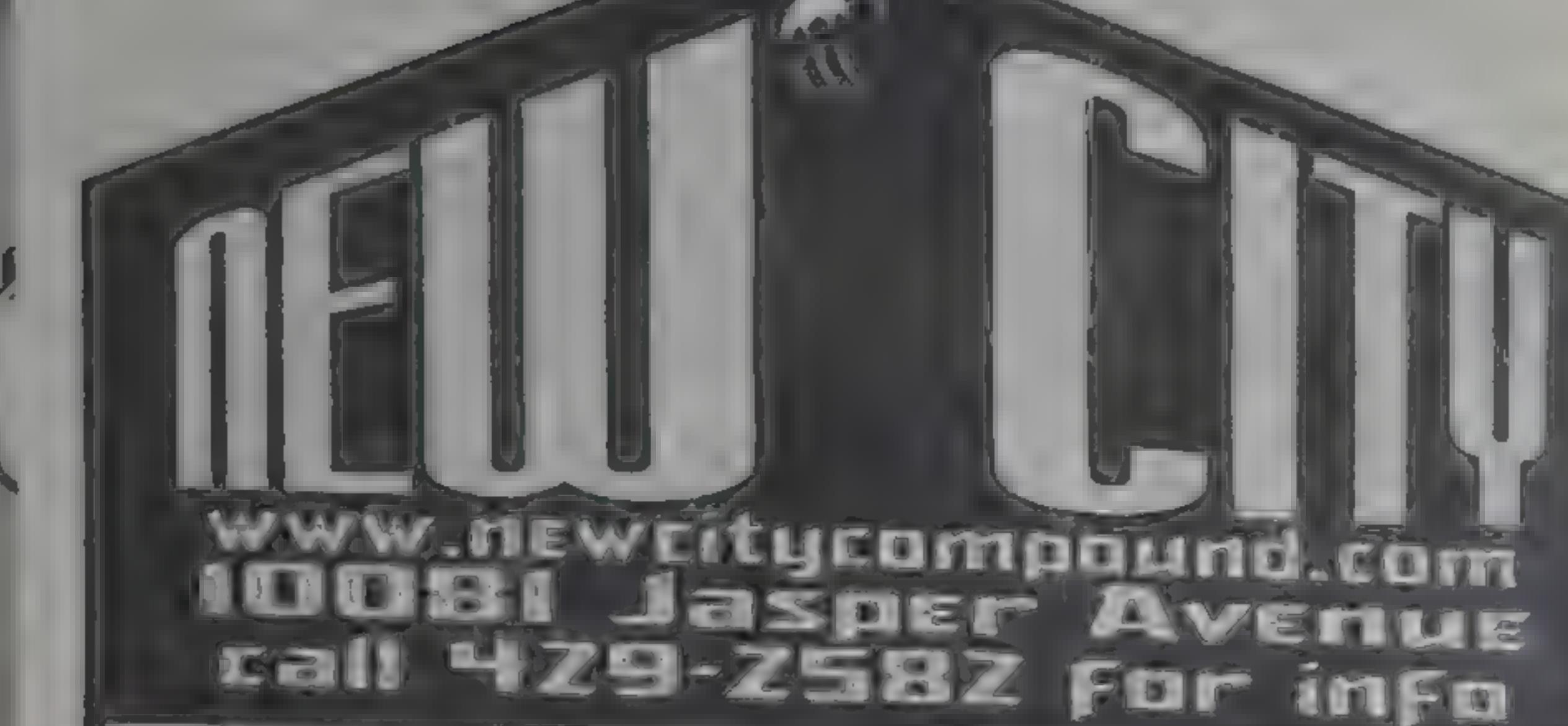
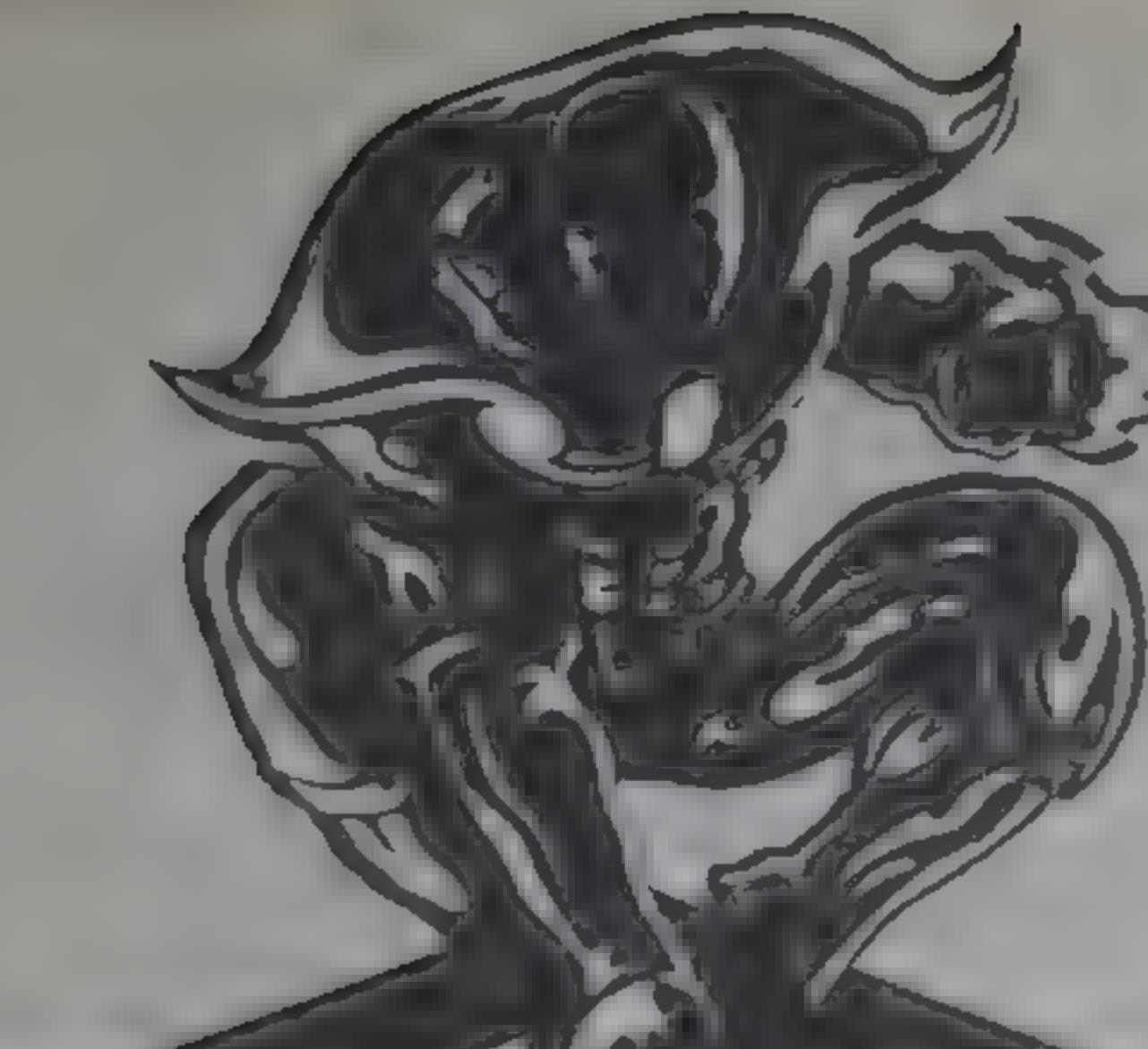
SXSW where she's looking to hook up with more international booking agents to keep the ball rolling. Having attended similar events over the years Vriend knows not to expect too much at SXSW, but the opportunity to perform at an event with so many movers and shakers in the mix is not to be missed. "The more you put your name out there, the more people subconsciously get this recognition going on," she says. "It just takes a lot of effort to even get heard of. There's a lot of names floating around the universe, you know. Plus, it's just fun." (PD)

Making every moment Count

Down for the Count • With Electric Frankenstein and Black Market Inc. • **New City** • Thu, Mar 10 Most people dream of being an astronaut or a cowboy when they're kids. But Uzi, rhythm guitarist for local speed-rock quintet Down for the Count, says he's always known he was destined to play rock 'n' roll. "I remember in elementary school when they asked you what you wanted to be, and I just said I wanted to be in a rock band," he says. "I wanted to play in a band and never really lost that."

Formed back in '99 while they were still in high school, the boys of Down for the Count have fought their way up through the ranks of hall shows and house parties and finally landed the biggest show of their career: opening for Electric Frankenstein. Size, however, isn't really important to these young rockers. "We don't care how many people we play in front of," Uzi says. "We just want to be up on that stage."

Even though Down for the Count just played the first Get Edmonton Together Festival (an event designed to promote tolerance and equality in the city's youth), they don't see their hard-hitting music as a political tool. "We're not too overtly political," Uzi says. "Our songs have more of a personal meaning to them." That said, he has noticed the scene becoming more socially aware in the last few years. "I think the scene now seems a lot more cultured almost," he says. "Back then it was all about headbanging and punk rock, and now it's like there's more bands with a political agenda." (PD)



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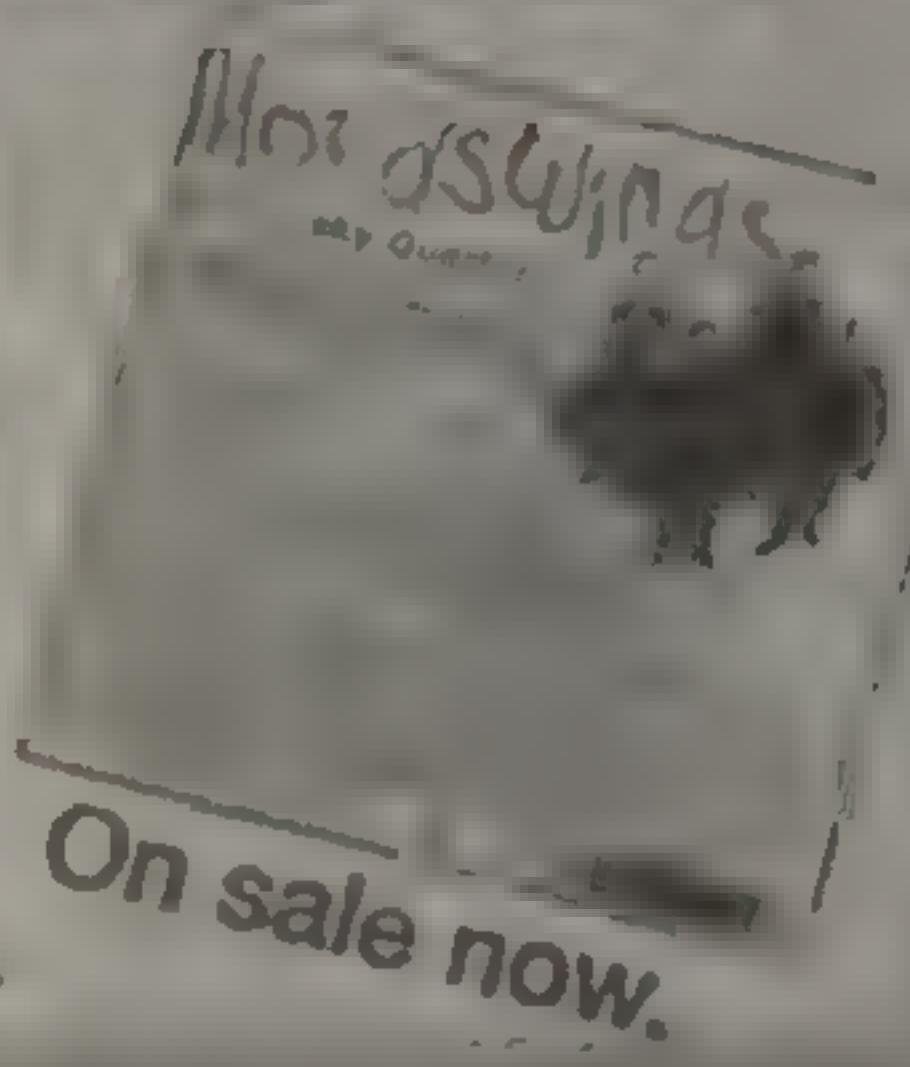
1. Ian Tyson - Songs From The Gravel Road (stony plain)
2. Bright Eyes - I'm Wide Awake It's Morning (saddle creek)
3. Thievery Corporation - The Cosmic Game (esl)
4. Bright Eyes - Digital Ash In A Digital Um (saddle creek)
5. Buena Vista Social Club - Manuel Guajiro Mirabal (nonesuch)
6. Iron & Wine - Women King (sub pop)
7. LCD Soundsystem - LCD Soundsystem (dfa)
8. Storyboard - Storyboard (sbmusic)
9. And You'll Know Us By The Trail Of Dead - Worlds Apart (interscope)
10. Beautiful Joe - Cover Up (indelible)
11. Kings Of Leon - Aha Shake Heartbreak (rca)
12. The Chemical Brothers - Push The Button (virgin)
13. Neko Case - The Tigers Have Spoken (mint)
14. John Guliak & The Lougan Brothers - 7 Stories & 13 Songs (mint)
15. Tony Joe White - The Heroines (sanctuary)
16. Stars - Set Yourself On Fire (arts & crafts)
17. Mf Doom - MM...Food (rhymesayers)
18. Arcade Fire - Funeral (merge)
19. The Postal Service - We Will Become Silhouettes (sub pop)
20. Madeleine Peyroux - Careless Love (rounder)
21. Tom Russell - Hotwalker (hightone)
22. Colleen Brown - A Peculiar Thing (colleen brown)
23. Billy Cowsell - Live From The Crystal Ballroom (indelible)
24. Andrea Revel - City Song (andrea revel)
25. Black Mountain - Black Mountain (scratch)
26. Crooked Fingers - Dignity & Shame (merge)
27. Five O'Clock Charlie - S/T (five o'clock Charlie)
28. Marianne Faithful - Before The Poison (anti)
29. The Fiery Furnaces - EP (rough trade)
30. Por Nada - A Huge Granite Structure Fell Out Of The Sky (por nada)

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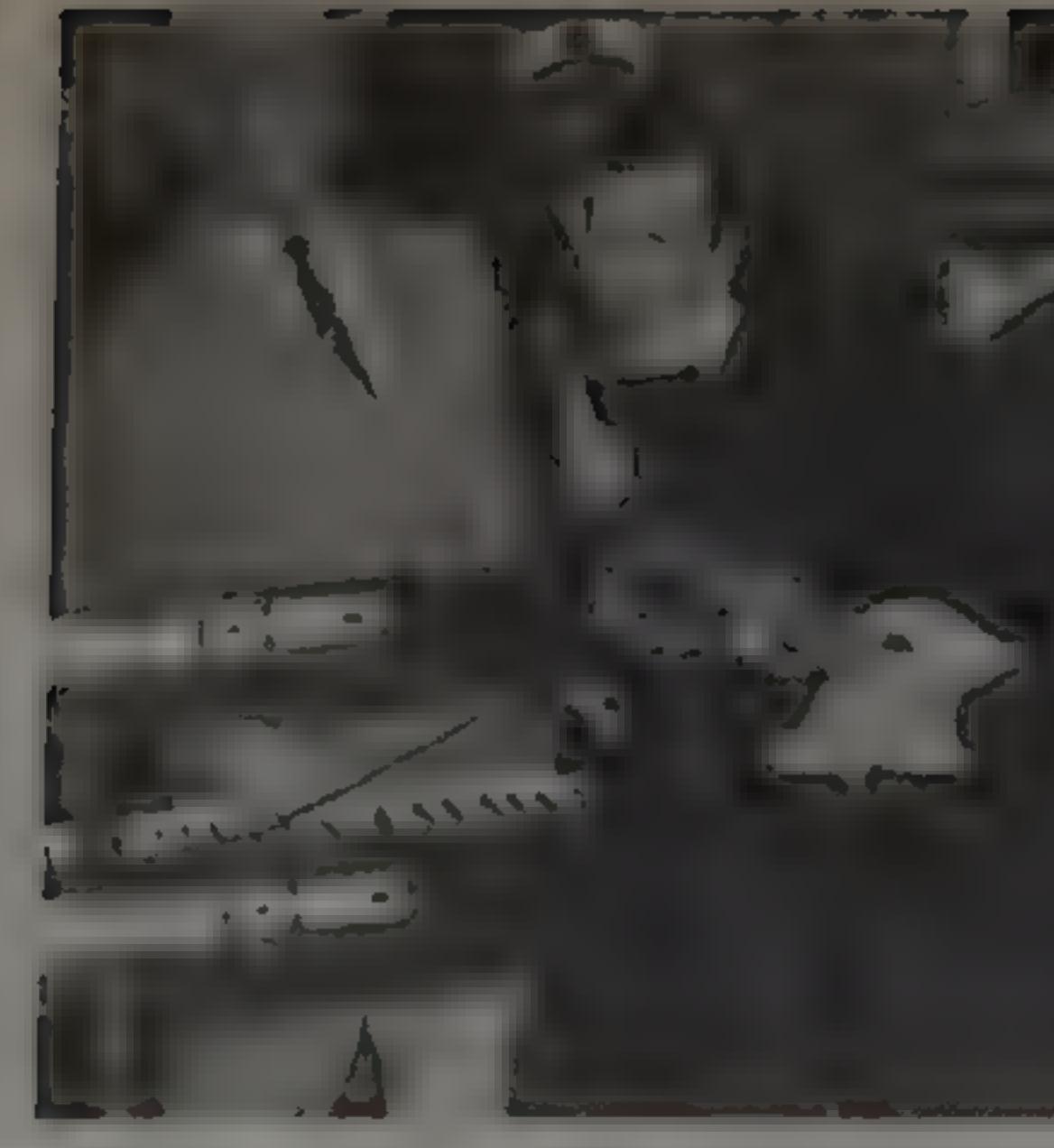
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THE PARAMOUNT THEATRE Weimar, 1929: Presented by Edmonton Opera; 8pm; tickets available at Edmonton Opera box office, TicketMaster

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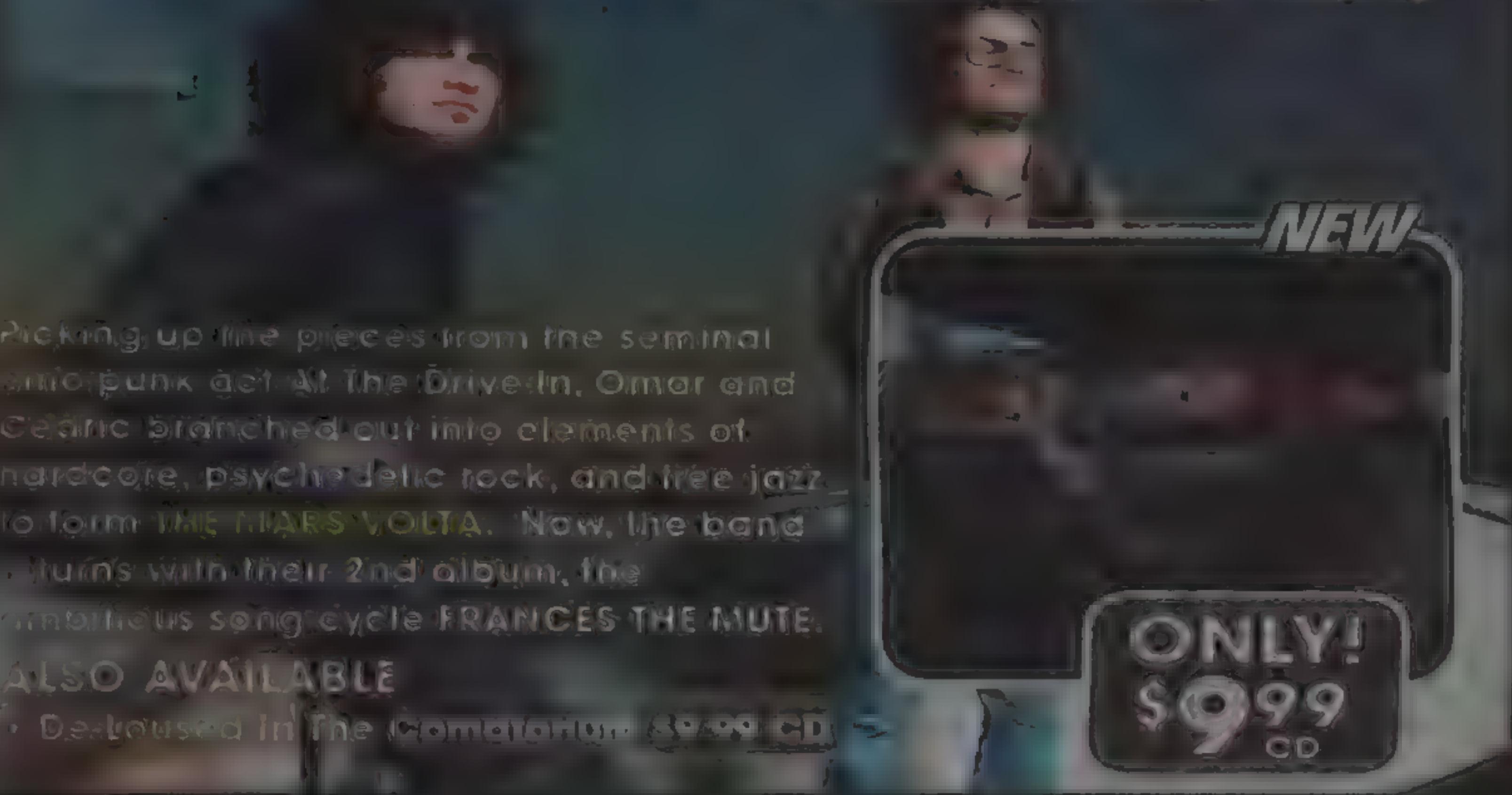
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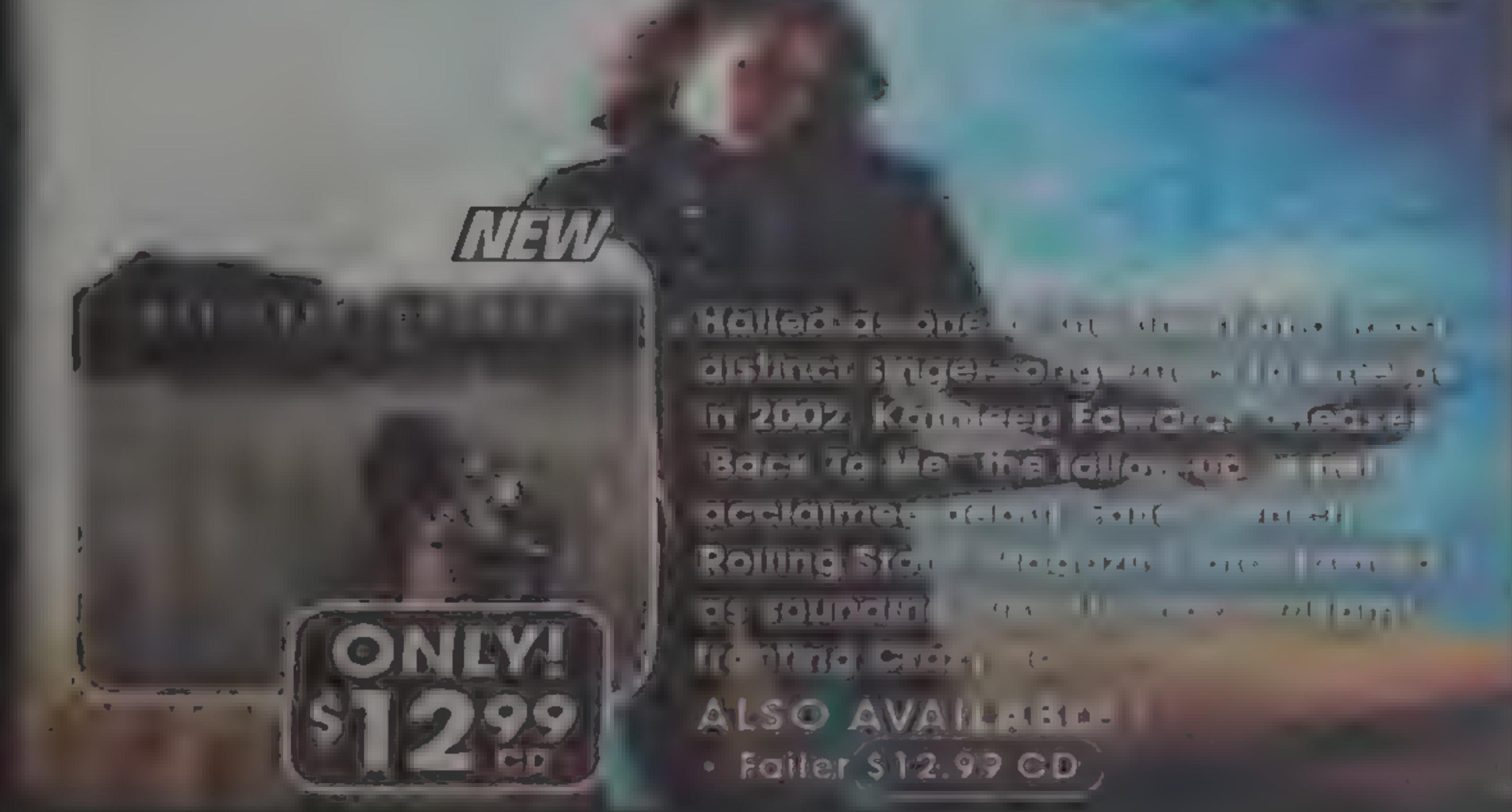
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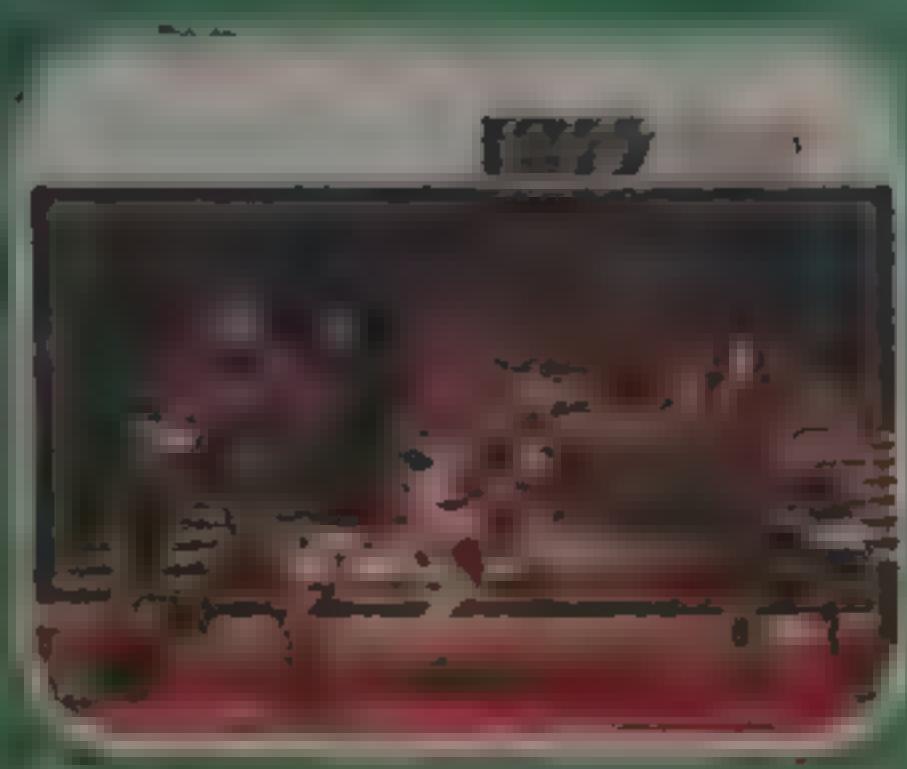
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BY DAVID STONE

Brimful of Sasha

... be honest, it took me a few days to recover from last Thursday's **Sasha** gig at the Standard; I was so bagged, in fact, that I didn't even make it out for Junior Brown's birthday party at Halo last Saturday, which was a real shame since I'm completely in love with the new look of the room. And Junior finally got a haircut. Swank all the way, ladies.

Back to the **Sasha**. I didn't get to the bar until past midnight, well after the Porter had whipped the packed room into a frenzy, but Alexander Coe clearly the real show. Unleashing a nonstop assault of rhythm, **Sasha** spent two hours splicing together tracks from his laptop and futuristic customizer. It was well after two when I decided to leave, the strains of Jacques Lou Cont's brilliant remix of the Killers' "Mr. Brightside" echoing to a conclusion—a track so good, I had to play it on my radio show that Saturday.

Sadly, the **Sasha** show took a toll on another gig that deserved a better

fate. Despite a modest turnout at the Victory Lounge that same Thursday night, **Matthew Dear** made the kids rock nonetheless with a live performance of his groovy minimal techno. While it's great that a superstar like **Sasha** can roll into town and get people excited, it's disappointing to see a worthwhile show getting the shaft.

Hopefully, **Jake Fairley** will see a booted-up crowd when he plays at the Victory tonight (Thursday) as part of Nik 7's NRMLS WLCM weekly. Fairley's stuff, recently captured on his most-awesome full-length *Touch Not the Cat* (available on Paperbag Records, home to Stars, Plastikman and Controller.Controller), is packed with devastating basslines, punching drums and glam-rock swagger. Tickets are available at the door.

You could start your night off over at the Back Room Vodka Bar, where the SubSound crew is throwing the pre-party for their DJ Craze party, which is dropping on Friday at the Starlite Room. Focus is a decent night, embracing all facets of broken beat, and this week features U.K. junglist **Perfect Combination**, a member of the legendary True Playaz and Moving Shadows units. Admission is free with your Craze ticket.

But the headz will be saving their energy for Friday night's shaker at the Starlite, which will be a showcase for Miami's **Craze**, one of the greatest deck innovators on the face of the earth. That isn't empty hyperbole: Craze conquered the DMC World championships three years in a row, took down all comers in the International Turntablist Federation

world finals, as well as the Zulu Nation and East Coast Rap Sheet battles.

Craze will be joined by Philadelphia MC Sharpness—who runs with MC Armanni in the group Mentally Sharp—Mumps, DJ Weaz-L and the Sub Sound crew. Tickets are available at Foosh and Underground WEM. And don't front: this is open to anyone who digs the underground sound of hip hop or jungle.

Now that the waves of **Sasha** have subsided and I've caught up on my sleep, there's news that Connected is pushing into spring in a huge way. First comes word that the voice of BBC Radio One's *Essential Selection*, **Pete Tong**, is finally dropping into Edmonton on March 20 at Escape. And then, like an uppercut, comes the second bulletin—**Felix Da Housecat** is back on April 7 at the Standard. Meanwhile, **Sasha**'s long-time sparring partner **John Digweed** is hitting Calgary's Outlaws nightclub on March 20 as well. And let's not forget about the next Key to Ibiza party at Rum Jungle on March 17, this time with **Lisa Lashes**. Wham bam, kids.

And yeah, those RND guys are back with another costume party, also on March 17, this time at Halo. It's called **Techno Five-O**, features Tryp-Tomene, Neal K and yours truly, and we expect everyone to come dressed for the beach. On St. Patrick's Day, no less. It might take more than a few days to recover this time. ☺

Listen to BPM with David Stone every Saturday at 6pm on CJSR-FM 88.5.



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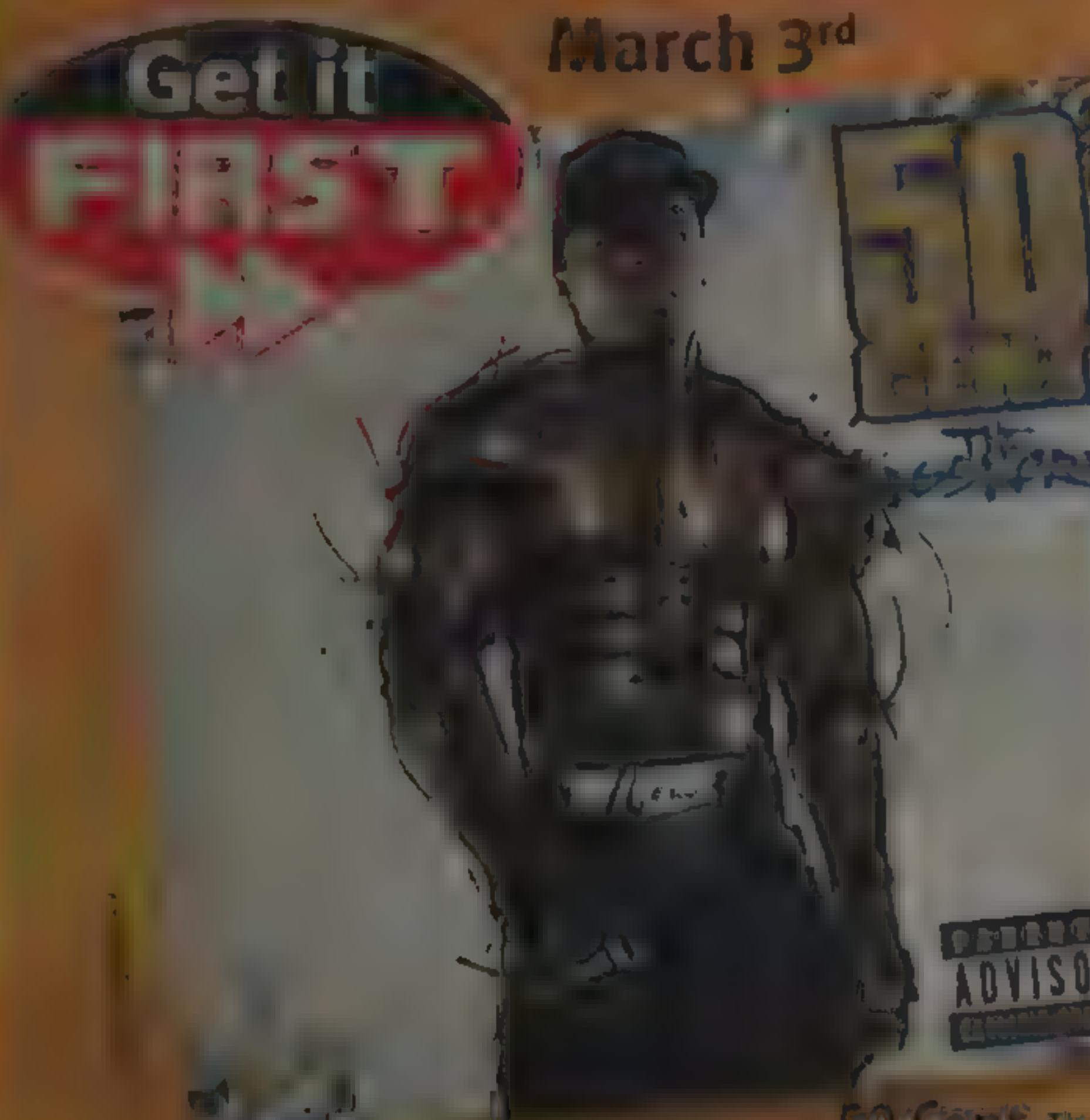
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BY STEVEN SANDOR

THIS WEEK: Paul Bellows discusses Elvis Costello's *All This Useless Beauty*

Even though Paul Bellows's new album *Tape Deck Classics* is filled with the same vigour that earned his 1998 debut, *Juliet Pauses*, a top-12 DIY album from *Performing Songwriter* magazine, Bellows admits that his conservative upbringing has him behind the times; when asked what album he would pick as the one that most influenced his musical career, he chose Elvis Costello's *All This Useless Beauty*. No surprise, really—a lot of singer-songwriters see Costello as an icon. But what might surprise Bellows's fans is that he first got into Costello after he was basically shamed into listening to his work.

"I grew up in a pretty religious family, and pretty much stuck to the party line all through high school and beyond," says Bellows. "I listened to a lot of Bruce Cockburn and other great songwriters, but I didn't really have friends or go to parties, so I didn't have anyone to teach me about rock'n'roll. I don't think I even tasted beer until after I was 20—and by then I was married."

"But halfway through my divorce, someone gave me *All This Useless Beauty*," he continues. "I'd been playing some of my music at open stages in Winnipeg, where I was living at the time, and one of the other musicians asked if I counted Elvis Costello as an influence. I said I'd never listened to him, and no one believed me. So they made me sit down and start listening. It was like a doorway into a world of songwriting that I didn't know existed; I felt like I'd found a new family."

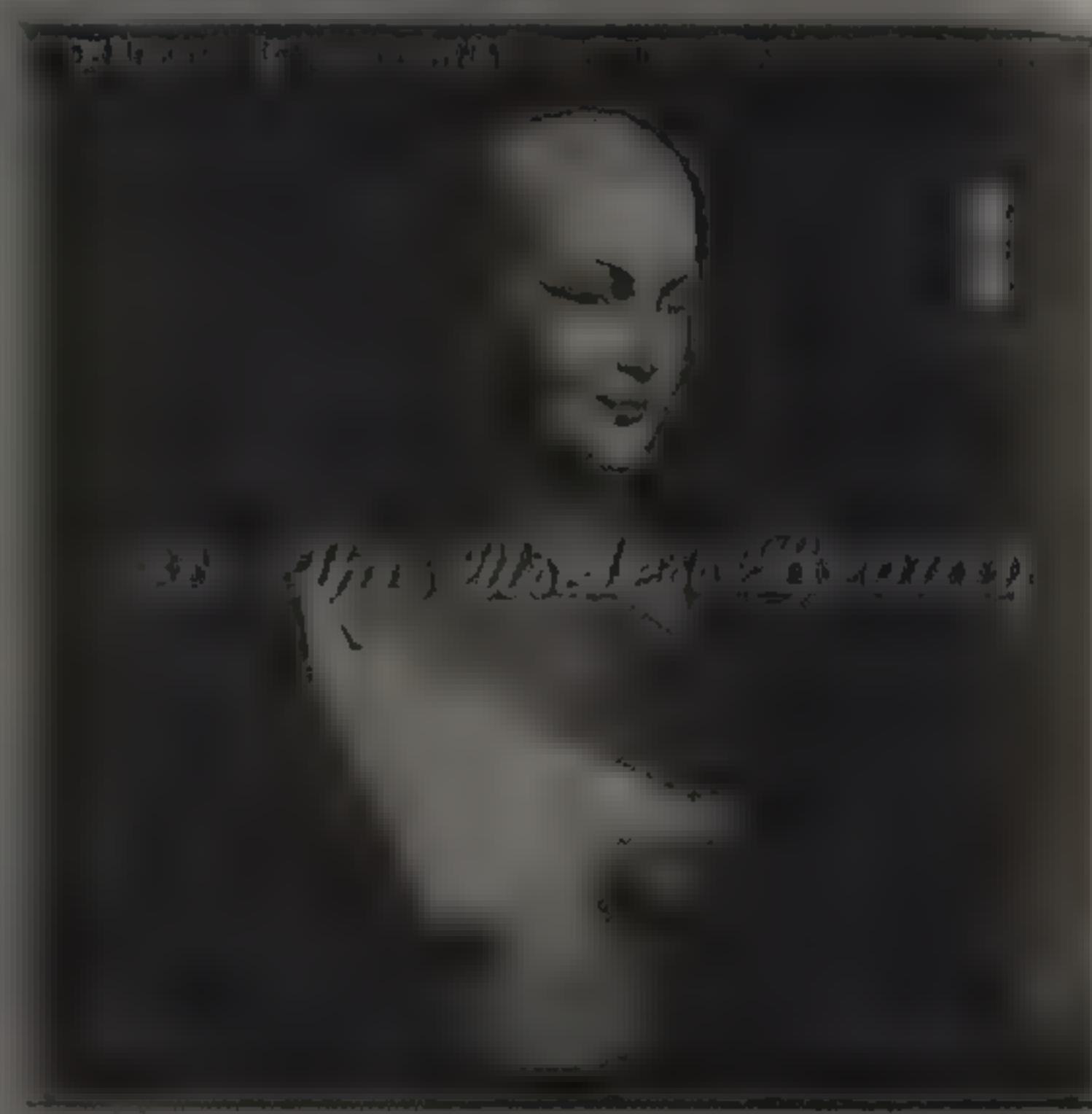
Released in 1996, *All This Useless Beauty* is a collection of songs that Costello had sitting around for years. Some of them were composed for other artists and ended up not being used; others were collaborations that never saw the light of day. Because of this, it offered the first-time Costello listener the chance to hear him through the various stages of his career. Notable on the album are "The Other End of the Telescope" (co-written with former *Til Tuesday* chanteuse Aimee Mann) and "Shallow Grave," which Costello co-wrote with Paul McCartney. While this collection doesn't really address the New Wave portion of Costello's career (there's nothing like "Pump It Up" here), it does offer a worthy look into a man who has transformed into a living legend.

Originally released by Warner, the album was actually one of Costello's poorest sellers, and it went out of print without a lot of fanfare. But Rhino Records has since re-released the

album with a bonus disc that includes demo versions of tunes and "My Dark Life," a collaboration with Brian Eno.

Although Costello currently occupies the throne as the most influential musician in Bellows's career, Bellows admits there's a chance that Costello might get unseated as he frantically tries to play catch-up with all the important musical artists of the last several decades.

"From that album, I've started working my way backwards in time, and then once I hit the early '70s I



started moving forwards again," he says. "I'm hoping that by the time I'm 40 I understand what is happening in music today. Right now I'm still in the mid- to late '80s. Just give me some time; I'll get there."

To find out about Bellows's latest album, or to check out when he will be playing in town next, surf over to www.paulbellows.com. □

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Plus
BLACK MARKET INC

DOWN FOR THE COUNT

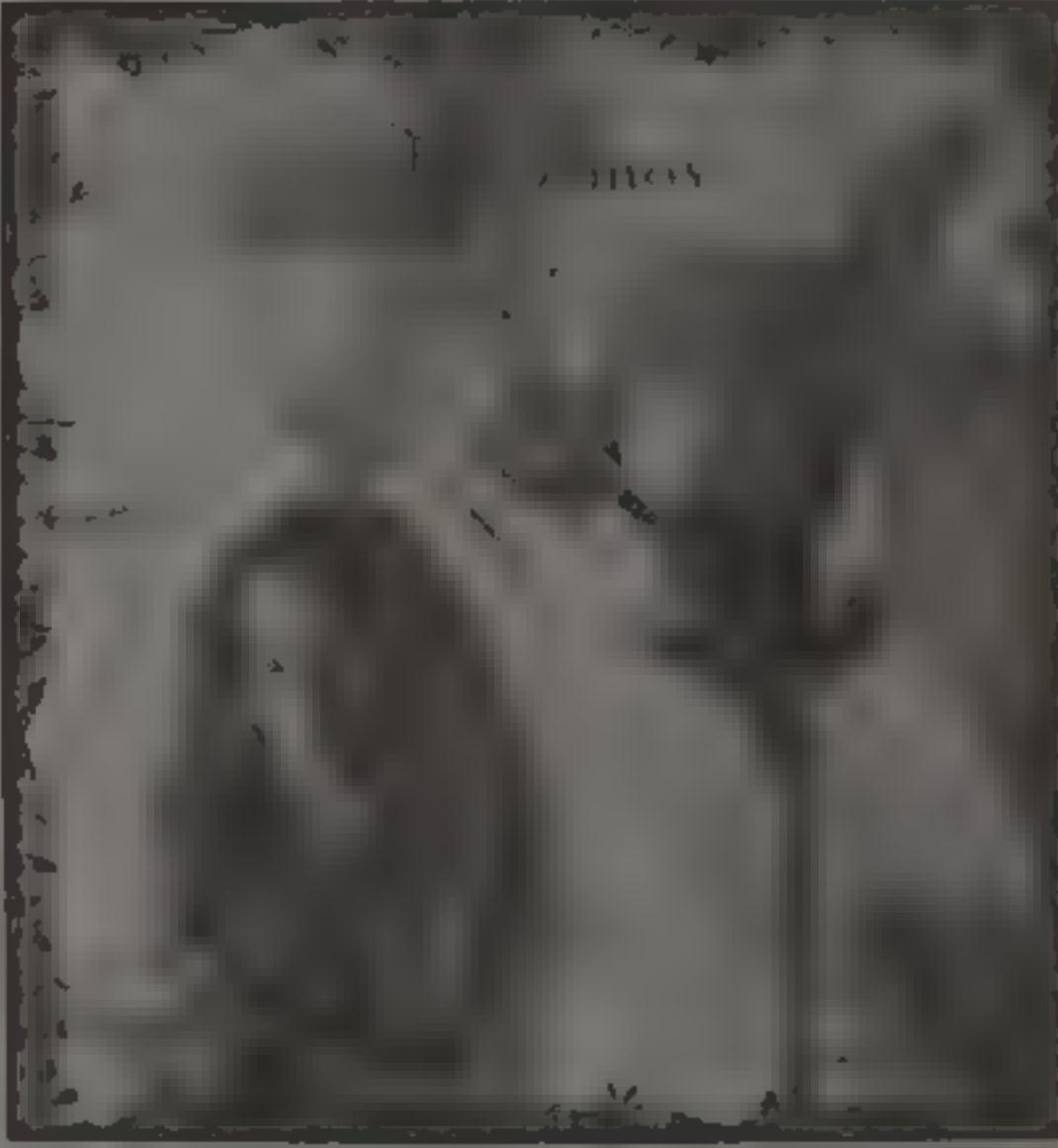
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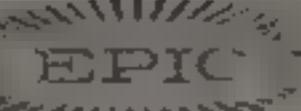
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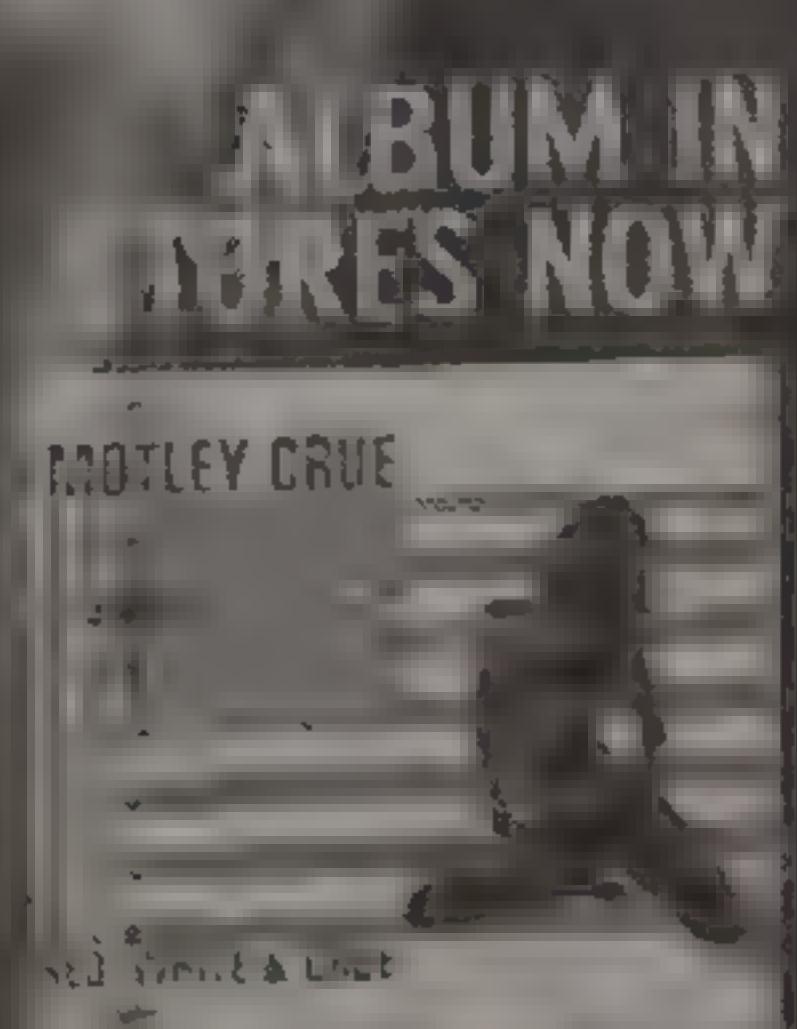
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MUSIC



Farmed and dangerous

Agriculture Club has cultivated a unique hybrid crop of country and metal

BY MIKE LAROCQUE

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"Once you've hit the five-year mark as a band, you're either doing something right or you're just spinning your wheels," says Nelson. "We've played a lot in six years and have matured as a band, and with this record we've really come into our sound. We're just a bunch of kids who love old country music. When I turned 13, I was listening to albums by AC/DC and Saxon, sort of the golden age of British heavy metal bands. Looking back and listening to Johnny Cash and Waylon Jennings, you think, 'This stuff is pretty good' but if you had told me back then that I would be playing that kind of music, I would have said that you were frickin' crazy, man!"

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Much adieu about nothing

A Last Goodbye bids a temporary farewell to Edmonton on eve of upcoming tour

By LEAH COLLINS

Even though A Last Goodbye last said hello to the Edmonton scene only a little more than a year ago, rhythm guitarist Darryn Pooke can't help but feel the group may have overstayed its welcome with the locals.

"Yeah, we've played a lot locally," says Pooke. "I think people are getting sick of us." He quickly brushes off the comment with a smile, but concedes that following their upcoming CD release at Victory for their new EP *Wide Eyes and Dreams*, the band feels it's time to wave bye-bye to the city—for a few weeks at any rate—and take their newly bought "sexual predator" van to beautiful British Columbia for a working vacation.

Come April they'll be hitting the usual western stops—Kelowna, Victoria, Vancouver—with the help of older, wiser stage-sharers the Drakes. "We developed a friendship with them," Pooke says, "so they're going to hook us up with some shows and in return, in the summer, we're going to hook them up with some Alberta dates."

The band's also been getting some pre-tour help from their lead vocalist, Liam Harvey Oswald. Oswald's done time with the likes of Les Tabernacles and the Casualties, making him, in the words of his school-aged bandmate Pooke, the "rusty old veteran" of the group. "We're kind of young and new to this so we have the tendency to want to rush into things," Pooke says. "But because of his experience, he's been letting us know to just take our time, don't rush into things, make sure everything's ready. Things like that. We're thinking of it as just a vacation with five of our friends and we're going to take it just one day at a time. And hopefully we have enough money at the end to make it back."

Taking Oswald's advice in stride,

the band took some baby steps last weekend by revving up the 12-seater and making a test trip to far-off Camrose. "That, I tell you, was an experience in its own," says Pooke. And while he's ready to keep pointing his van wherever there's a show to be played, Pooke says the band's first gig "abroad" wasn't quite as magical as they'd hoped. "Coming into the venue, we weren't sure whether it was going to be a very receptive crowd," he says. "There was a wide variety of people there. There were your younger kids, then there were middle-aged people; it was a blues club, so it was different. But after the show, people were coming up and they were saying that they didn't really like our music that much because it wasn't their thing, but we entertained them well." He chuckles. "I don't know what that means."

WHILE THE GROUP'S MUSIC might easily be called hardcore punk, Pooke likes to refer to it as "unicorn rock," if for no reason other than the band's unofficial mascot is a unicorn cutout that Pooke proudly sits upon his amp. Pooke's always had a certain affinity towards the regal beast for its mystical powers, but it hasn't always been with the band. "It was last June and Five o'Clock Charlie played at Stars and they had their stage littered with cardboard cutouts of random animals," Pooke explains. "And I asked the bass player if I could have the unicorn, and he gave it to me. It's white and it's got orange and pink and green pipe-cleaner hair. It's pretty spectacular."

Maybe it's those rumoured mystical powers, but the unicorn has made an impression. "At our Megatunes show, a fan gave us a stuffed unicorn doll—I was pretty happy about that," says Pooke, who's a little glum that there haven't been any contributions since. "I think that was my only fan." Pooke's eager to expand his collection, though, which seems all the more reason to hit the road—who knows what unicorn treasures lie beyond the greater Edmonton area? ☀

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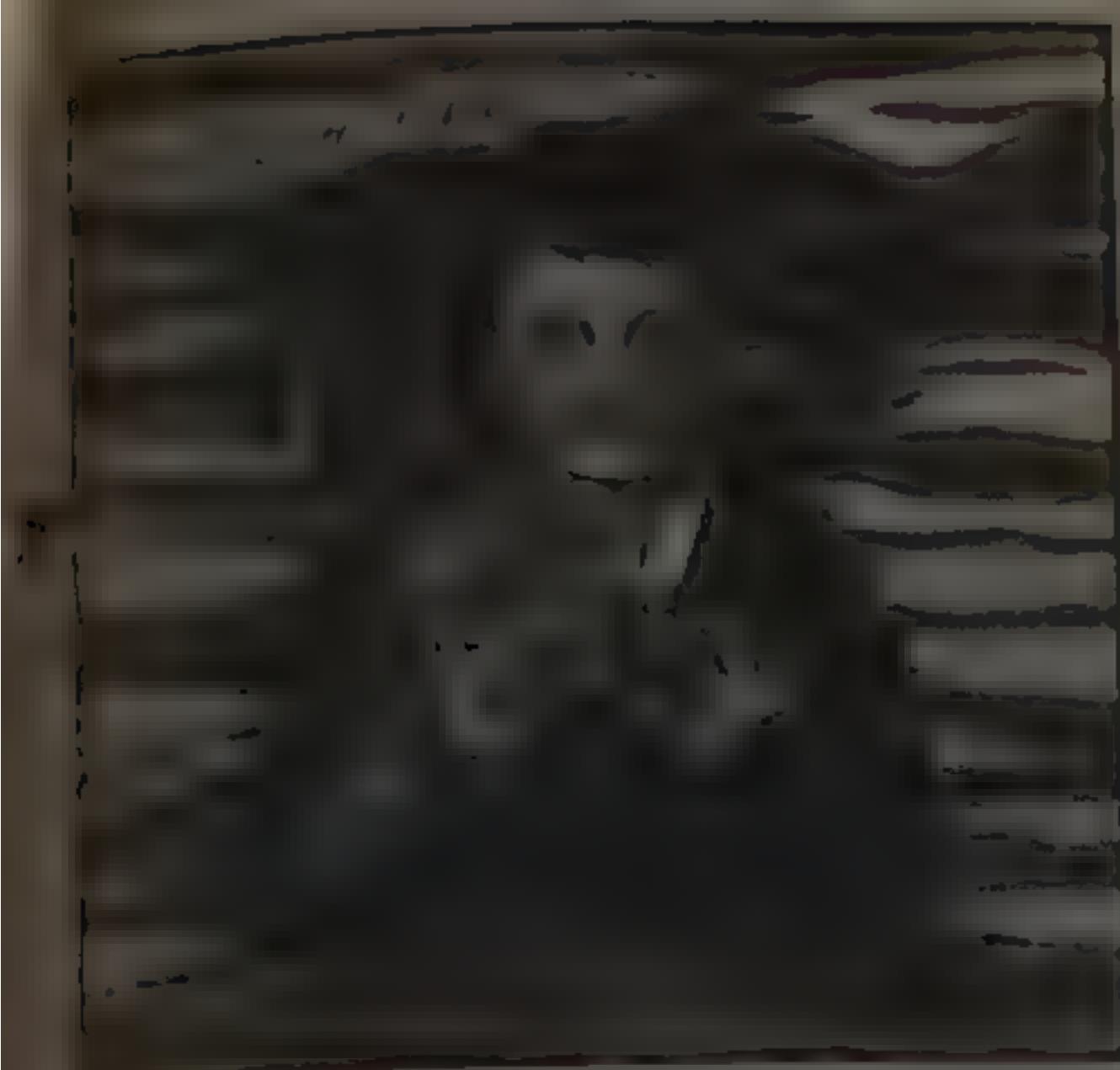
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JOEL PLASKETT
LA DE DA
(MAPLEMUSIC)

The former leader of Thrush Hermit has made a real splash since that band broke up, and Plaskett's work with his new backing band, the Emergency, has earned rave reviews across the nation. But this time around, there is no Emergency. This is a Joel Plaskett album, pure and simple, and it has much more of an alt-country feel than anything he's done in the past. In fact, Plaskett goes out of his way to make this as close to a quintessential cheatin', drinkin', cussin' and in' record as he can possibly get.

It might sound like a negative, but Plaskett's over-the-top delivery lets us know he's having some self-indulgent fun and his tongue is planted firmly in his cheek. Just listen to "Television Set," a twangy, pedal-steel-backed tune on which Plaskett assumes the character of a working-class stiff who is sick of his wife and kids and full-time job (a country theme that's been mined by everyone from Johnny Cash to Johnny Paycheck), and thanks the stars for his television set, which allows him to escape it all. The other highlight is "Happen Now," a joyous country rocker boasting more than a few nods to the likes of Uncle Tupelo and the Jayhawks. Plaskett's attempts to be down-home country can be a little overbearing, but *La De Da* features enough glittering moments to make it worthwhile. ★★★ —STEVEN SANDOR



TORI AMOS
THE BEEKEEPER
(EPIC)

First off, I should qualify this review by saying I really wanted to heart this album, but no matter how hard I try, I just can't seem to convince myself.

After a few listens, the opening tracks of "Parasol" and "Sweet the Sting" emerge as the two highlights of this 80-minute epic; both songs are full of ear-pleasing harmonies and the addition of the London Community Gospel Choir on "Sweet the Sting" adds some extra pizzazz. But once you get past those two tracks, *The Beekeeper* lapses into lacklustre material that fails to ring new changes on that familiar and accessible Tori Amos piano formula. Songs like "Ribbons Undone" and "Ireland" float by gracefully enough but fail to inspire as Amos unsteadily walks the fine line between contemporary adult pop singer and exhilarating, edgy songstress. And songs with titles like "Hoochie Woman" and "The Power of Orange Knickers" practically beg you to turn off the stereo and go do something else.

The Beekeeper's broad musical arrangements, tender lyrics and powerful vocals will likely prove satisfactory to Amos's more devout fans. But is it anything new? Not really. ★★ —JASMINE POLITESKI



UNWRITTEN LAW
HERE'S TO THE MOURNING
(LAVA/WARNER)

What would happen if all the guys in Collective Soul got some extra tattoos, bought some hair dye and slathered on mountains of black eyeliner? Well, aside from no one caring, they'd also be the nearly-identical twins of San Diego punks-turned-MOR rockers Unwritten Law.

Even though the band has earned itself quite a reputation on the punk scene, *Here's to the Mourning* makes it clear right from the get-go that Unwritten Law is chasing mainstream acceptance—the disc contains song after song built around the same grinding guitar sound and soaring vocal style as Collective Soul. The comparison is uncomfortable, but just too obvious to ignore.

To try and compare this disc to other punk records, or even classify it as pop-punk, would be impossible. Punk fans are going to have to accept the fact that Unwritten Law has abandoned them and moved into a by-the-numbers mainstream rock style that should earn them lots of hoots and hollers from the same people who listen to Maroon 5. If you bought this album based on the band's past track record—well, you've heard the phrase "buyer beware," right? ★ —STEVEN SANDOR

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BY WHITEY
AND T.B. PLAYER

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(independent)
Young stoners in love
Good start! Now, put down bong and
Write more than three tunes

Original Soundtrack
XXX: Music from Thinking XXX
(Emperor Norton)
Hip modern artists
Accompany pics of huge,
flaccid, bulbous dinks

Ramachandra Borcar
Steel and Glass
(Semprini)
Steady low-key jazz
Like a hamster in a wheel
Mesmerizing fun

Greg Keelor
Seven Songs for Jim
(Telesoul)
Blue Rodeo guy
Sings septet of sombre strains
Jim's a lucky man

Full White Drag
Everything Will Fall on One Night
(Outer Flight)
Noisy, busy stuff
But is it worth the effort?
I'd have to say no

Death Angel
Archives and Artifacts
(Rykodisc)
Classic thrash metal
From days when Metallica
Didn't suck big wang

Nic Armstrong and the Thieves
The Greatest White Liar
(New West)
'60s garage rock
Sure, it's all been done before...
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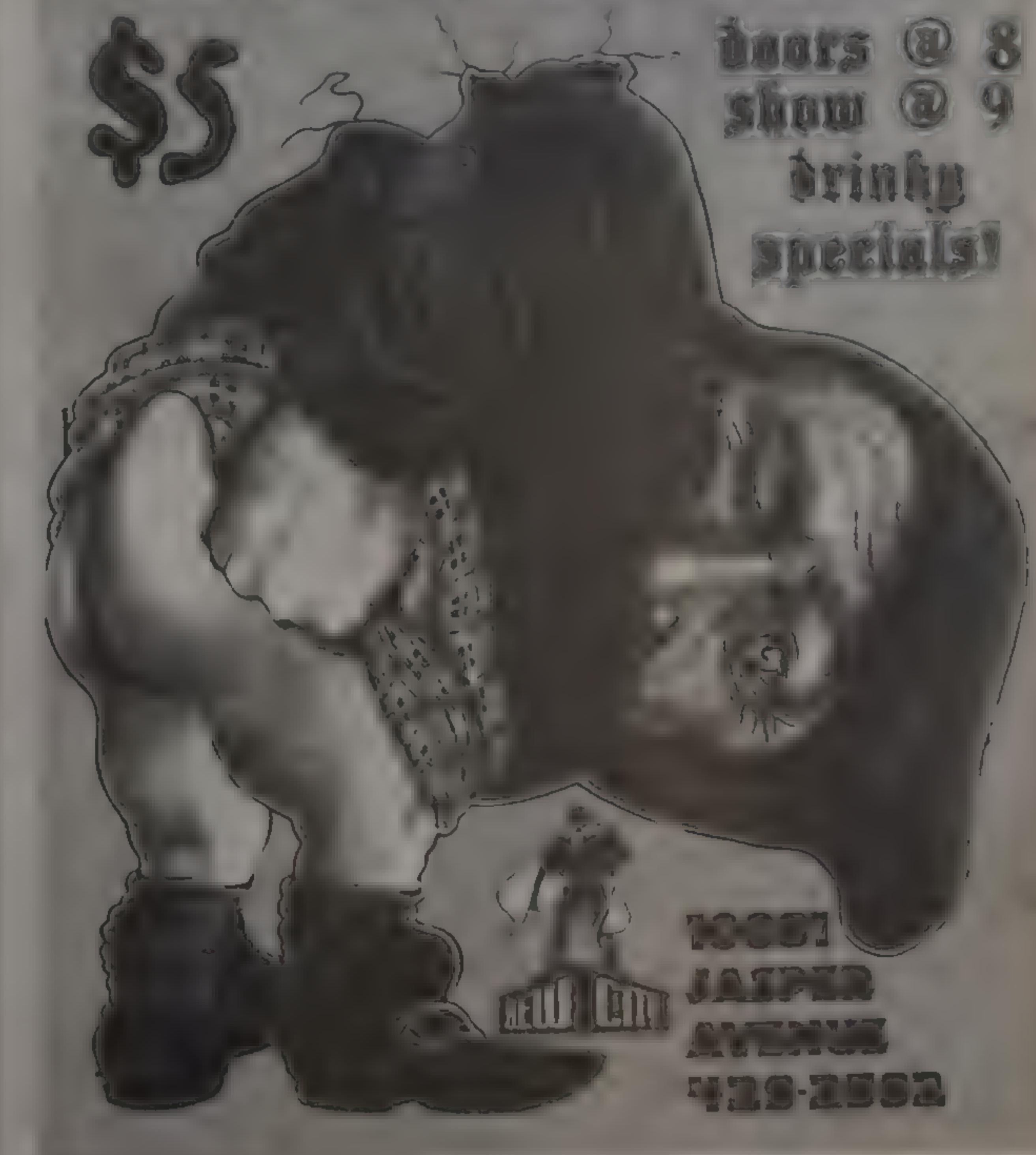
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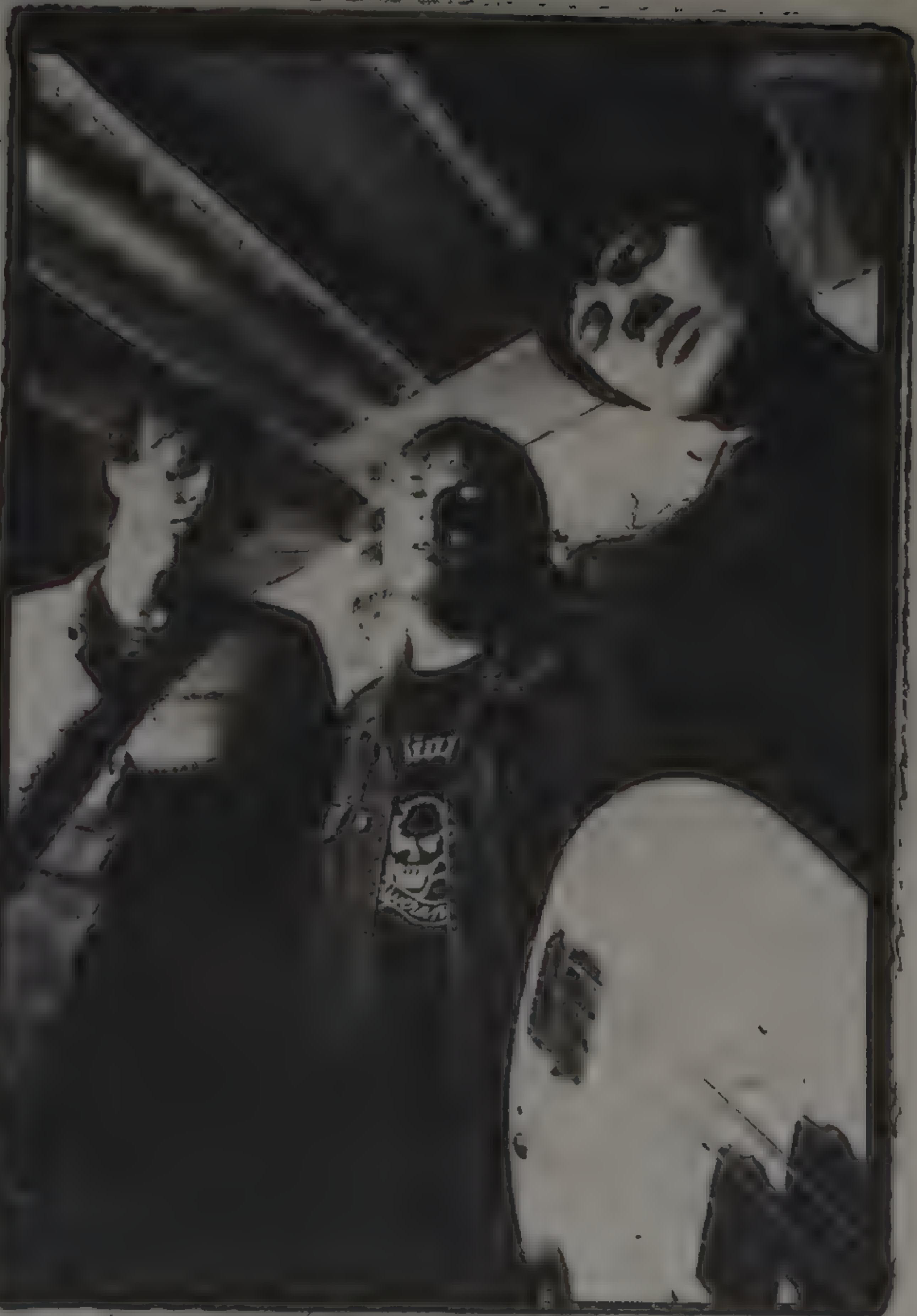


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MUSIC



Friends of royalty

Saskatoon's Junior Pantherz rub shoulders with rock gods and British bluebloods alike

By DAVID BERRY

Most bands are happy if they manage to get one primo opening slot for a band they at least sort of like; if they got two for bands they actually approve of, they'd probably be ecstatic. But if, like Saskatoon's Junior Pantherz, they managed to get three opening slots with bands like the Dears, Modest Mouse and the mother of all opening gigs, the Pixies, they'd probably shit themselves and pass

out in a fit of orgasmic glee. Pantherz lead singer/guitarist Terry Mattson, however, seems to be taking his opening gigs for some of modern rock's best and brightest all in stride. Mostly.

"The whole Pixies thing was pretty surreal," admits Mattson rather sedately. "Even the fact of them being a band again and still playing—even if I weren't opening

for them, I probably would have been in awe just seeing them."

Sadly, though, Mattson and his bandmates (bassist SJ Kardash and drummer Arnold van Lambalgen) didn't get much of an opportunity to bask in the glow of Black Francis and the bunch. "Actually," he says, "the

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only one who we met was David [Lovering], the drummer—he was the only one who sort of took it upon himself to introduce himself to us and we talked a bit at soundcheck but I didn't even see Frank and everybody else. They were there for soundcheck and then they were whisked away, so there wasn't really a lot of time to be all over them and stuff. I'm sure I would have, though, if I'd met them: 'You guys are awesome—remember when you put out *Trompe le Monde*?' It's kind of hard not to be a big fan with these bands.

They've been able to get pretty close to some of the other bands they've played with. The Dears, for instance, liked them so much they invited them out to Montreal, and even gave them a subtle nod in a recent photo shoot. "Yeah," Mattson says, "it was in *Magnet* magazine, I think, and [drummer] George Donoso was actually wearing our shirt, which is kind of nice. It's kind of nerdy to be proud of that, I guess, but still," he concludes with a near-audible shrug.

AND ROCK STARS aren't the only people the Pantherz have been cavorting with—they count a few members of the British royal family among their fans as well. Apparently, thanks to the band's intrepid rhythm section, Prince Charles himself is a proud owner of their third album, *The Last Two Million Years*. "I wasn't involved in that," Mattson says. "I thought the whole idea was a little ridiculous. Well, I shouldn't say ridiculous, but I just didn't think we could pull it off and actually get to him. I mean [Charles] was visiting Saskatoon and was down by the river, and there was already this mob everywhere. But somehow Arnold and SJ just happened to be in the right place at the right time, and they gave him a disc and asked him to give it to Harry or something. I'm sure that seconds later he threw it in the trash—or at least he got one of his security guards to."

That's hardly any way to treat a Grammy-nominated album. Or an album with a "Grammy-nominated" sticker on it, anyway. "Arnold, our drummer, works for Universal Music, and he had a roll of these stickers lying around, and he decided to throw them on *The Last Two Million Years*," Mattson says. "We didn't think anyone would take it seriously, but we played a show in a little place in B.C., and we sent them a promo pack with a disc in it with one of those stickers on it. Well, they took it seriously, and we got there, and they had these posters up, like, 'Willy's Pub welcomes the 2000 Grammy-nominated Junior Pantherz.'

"Everyone else seems to realize right away that it's a big joke," Mattson continues. "I mean, we'd probably be a lot bigger if we were nominated for a Grammy, really. Maybe we'll throw some 'Juno nominee' stickers on our new one." ♦

JUNIOR PANTHERZ

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Faced with an unusually weak slate of new movies opening this Friday—if you’re eager to read a review of *Vin Diesel in The Pacifier*, you’d better look elsewhere—Vue decided instead to ask four of our film writers to write about their latest discoveries on DVD. Whether your tastes run more toward James Cagney or Robert Culp, here’s a host of good reasons to stay in front of the TV set this weekend.



Angels With Dirty Faces

Gangster boogie

Cagney and Bogart reload their gats for deluxe DVD box set

BY BILL BEARD

The cinematic culture we live in has been so soaked in crime stories for all of living memory, and so soaked right now that it's hard to think that it had a beginning. But it did, in the first years of sound film. When the first wave of gangster movies burst on America—around 50 films over a three-year period, 1930-32—people were thrilled and alarmed by what they saw. The gangster's mode of regular violent aggression was something totally new and, as exemplified by new stars like Edward G. Robinson and James Cagney, really charismatic.

To feel the raw power and exciting moral transgression of these movies nowadays, you probably need to use a bit of imagination, but it's worth it. Gangsters are radical exemplars of the entrepreneurial, all-action model of America: do something, get what you want, don't be a patsy. In these early expression years, the old promise that you would rise if you worked hard, led clean and displayed honest ambition was turning into a joke. That the titles in Warner's new DVD box set *The Gangster Collection*, with their uneducated Italian gangsters, show is that these guys will never be able to rise unless they do it with a gun, and when they do pick up a gun it is only to act out a hideous caricature of capitalist economic competition (an idea that was finally made explicit in *The Godfather's* "make him an offer he can't refuse"). Gangsters are really American.

The movies in this reissue box are not uniformly great—in fact, they're not even uniformly good. They aren't nearly as impressive individually as

the contents of the Film Noir box that came out last year—not as stylish in look, storyline or dialogue. But they are far more historically important, and they remain fascinating movies despite their weaknesses. Two of the original "big three" first-wave gangster movies, *Little Caesar* and *The Public Enemy*, are here (the third, the 1932 *Scarface*, is only available in the preposterous Deluxe Suitcase Edition of the 1982 remake). All three are "rise and fall" movies. *Little Caesar* mixes lots of bad dialogue, bad acting and clunky staging with superb individual moments, and Robinson is splendid in the title role. But he's not

as splendid as Cagney in *The Public Enemy*. Actually the whole box is a Cagney festival (he stars in four of the six movies) and a lavish demonstration for anybody who wants to know what the shouting was about. *The Public Enemy* is the obverse of *Little Caesar*: basically a very good movie with some awkward spots. It has a sociological, almost documentary-like quality, an unvarnished directness of address, that is still convincing.

ALL THE LATER MOVIES are in reaction to this first wave. In 1934 the censorship hammer came down, and gangster movies had to reinvent themselves to survive. One of the main strategies—still working fine today—was to just make your gangster into a cop. Same tough-guy actor, same take-no-shit attitude, same screw-you dialogue, still pushing people around and shooting people up, only now he's somehow a good guy. The other major strategy, which was to try to redeem the gangster and turn his anarchic energies to work for the good, can be seen in both *Angels With Dirty Faces* and *The Roaring Twenties*. In many ways these are

both conventionally good films, with smooth direction, excellent dialogue and fine ensemble playing. But *Angels* is one of the strangest movies ever made. It twists itself in knots trying to co-opt Cagney's gangster charisma into a prosocial force, and ends with the truly desperate stratagem of making Cagney pretend to turn yellow as he goes to the electric chair so the teenage punks who worship him will have their faith broken. Yikes! Meanwhile *The Roaring Twenties* is already, in 1939, openly nostalgic about the good old days of gangsters, and has Cagney first being practically forced into crime through the frustration of his honest efforts: he thrives as a booze kingpin during Prohibition, becomes an alcoholic cab driver after Repeal and finally sacrifices himself to protect the family of the woman he loves but who has rejected him. As he lies full of bullet holes on the steps of the cathedral, his old admirer tells a cop, "He used to be a big shot." Yes, and everybody can also agree that he was a really fine person.

The Petrified Forest shouldn't even be in the box, because (a) it's not a very good movie, and (b) the gangster in it, Humphrey Bogart in his defining role, gets only fourth billing after Leslie Howard as an English writer hitchhiking across America spouting poetic speeches about the meaning of life, Bette Davis as the Arizona truck-stop owner's daughter who reads François Villon and yearns to go to Paris and be a painter, and I forget who else. Bogart is indeed terrific, but the whole thing stinks of the stage—it's a straight transferral of the Broadway hit by Sherwood Anderson, whose aim was evidently to preach like George Bernard Shaw at his very worst. If they needed a Warners Bogart movie it should have been *High Sierra* (1941), one of the towering master-

SEE PAGE 31



At peace with the Universe

Funny, evocative *Last Life in the Universe* is a DVD treasure worth searching the earth for

BY JOSEF BRAUN

While elaborately staged martial arts films reach larger audiences, an increasing number of the most lovely, distinctive and carefully crafted smaller movies are pouring out of Asian countries at a dizzying rate, only to find themselves without a fraction of that same level of international exposure. I just saw one of last year's best movies, but I had to see it on DVD because no theatres around here ever screened it. It's called *Last Life in the Universe*; it was made by a Thai director, stars a Japanese actor and was shot by an Australian expatriate. Unsurprisingly, it's about displacement and cultural

REVUE DVD

collision, but it's also an eloquent, idiosyncratic and funny depiction of rootlessness, loneliness and fractured communication.

Set in Bangkok and a nearby village, *Last Life in the Universe* opens with fixed shots of an exceedingly neat apartment, books, chairs and tables all placed with the deliberated precision of Geraldine Page's vases and paintings in the first shots of Woody Allen's *Interiors*. But the first mess we see tips us off to what's really happening here: a pile of books is spilled across the floor, above them dangle the two feet of a hanging man, and a note rests nearby that reads "This is bliss." Now, our protagonist Kenji isn't actually dead yet, but he's so consumed by (and even at peace with) his loneliness that for him, death is not an experience fraught with drama, but a place he might need to go to quietly. Thing is, *Last Life* won't let him. His suicide is interrupted by a visit from his asshole brother, his final statement is used for an obnoxious note that reads "Out jogging" and his world of order is about to collapse.

Though little fuss is made over them, extraordinary circumstances dominate *Last Life*, with even a few yakuza (one played by Takashi Miike) stopping by. Extraordinary circumstances separate Kenji from his brother and Noi, a young Thai woman about to embark on a big trip, from her kid sister. And extraordinary circumstances bring Kenji and Noi together for a time in a lonely coun-

try house as disastrously messy as Kenji's urban apartment is ordered (There's some warm cultural teasing going on here between traditional Japanese and Thai aesthetics.) Once we arrive at the house, the film's singular magic and quirky sensibility really take hold, making its own rules and leading us to some eerily beautiful places. All the while, Kenji and Noi speak to each other in bad English, their only shared language. This limitation provides the film's most winning lines, as when the two are driving along a pleasant beachside road and Kenji explains, "My house smell bad. Two dead people inside ... Looks like fun around here."

KENJI'S PLAYED by Asano Tadanobu, one of Japan's biggest stars (see *Taboo*, *Ichi the Killer* or *Zatôichi*) and leader of the rock outfit Mach 1.67. With his long bangs, insistent stubble and deadpan comic demeanour, it wouldn't be unfair

to compare him to

Johnny Depp. Rather than try to act out Kenji's emotions, Tadanobu seems to simply assume the role, letting all relevant elements of his personal experience bring depth and shading to the character. What's left outside the frame is key here. Like Tadanobu, director and co-writer Pen-Ek Ratanaruang has enough trust in the film's mood, characters and settings that things like story don't seem so important to him—or at least they don't need to be attended to like a mortally ill patient. With Wong Kar-wai's steady shooter Christopher Doyle providing the framing and muted tones, *Last Life* is seductive enough that you won't be concerning yourself with its lack of plot. There's nothing precious about Ratanaruang's peculiarities, or anything disingenuous about his observations of everyday irony.

I started out complaining about having to see this film on DVD, but I also have to acknowledge one of the beauties of this medium: it allows us to watch it again whenever we want and *Last Life in the Universe* rewards repeated viewings. The DVD also contains an enjoyable, insightful interview with Ratanaruang and a commentary track by Doyle that plays as a jargon-free meditation on his art, his process and the distinct challenges of low-budget filmmaking in Asia. ♦

LAST LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE

Directed by Pen-Ek Ratanaruang •

Written by Pen-Ek Ratanaruang and Prabda Yoon • Starring Asano Tadanobu and Sinita Boonyasak • Now on DVD

Hardnosed Highways

James Szalapski's landmark alt-country documentary drives onto DVD

BY EDEN MUNRO

At Christmastime in 1975, filmmaker James Szalapski descended upon Nashville, Tennessee with camera in hand. Over the next two weeks he spent time there (and in Texas) filming outlaw songwriters like Guy Clark, Townes Van Zandt, David Allan Coe and even a young Steve Earle as they played their songs and talked about music and life. The resulting film, *Heartworn Highways*, sat on a shelf until a brief theatrical release in 1981, after which it again faded into distant memory. Now the finished film has found a home on DVD, along with a generous helping of additional performances every bit as good as those which made the final cut.

Heartworn Highways opens with Clark performing "L.A. Freeway," a song that captures a desperate escape from the concrete and commercialism of Los Angeles while offering a glimpse of the freedom beyond. As the last notes fade away, Clark takes

a drag of his cigarette, looks at the camera and suggests that the take was "a little loose." That's an accurate summary of the film too. Szalapski doesn't shy away from leaving the rough edges in full view. This is not a film for fans of the slick productions that pass for country music today; it's a film about talented songwriters living rough lives and then singing about them.

Szalapski doesn't try to force a plot onto the screen; instead he places seemingly unrelated sequences alongside each other to

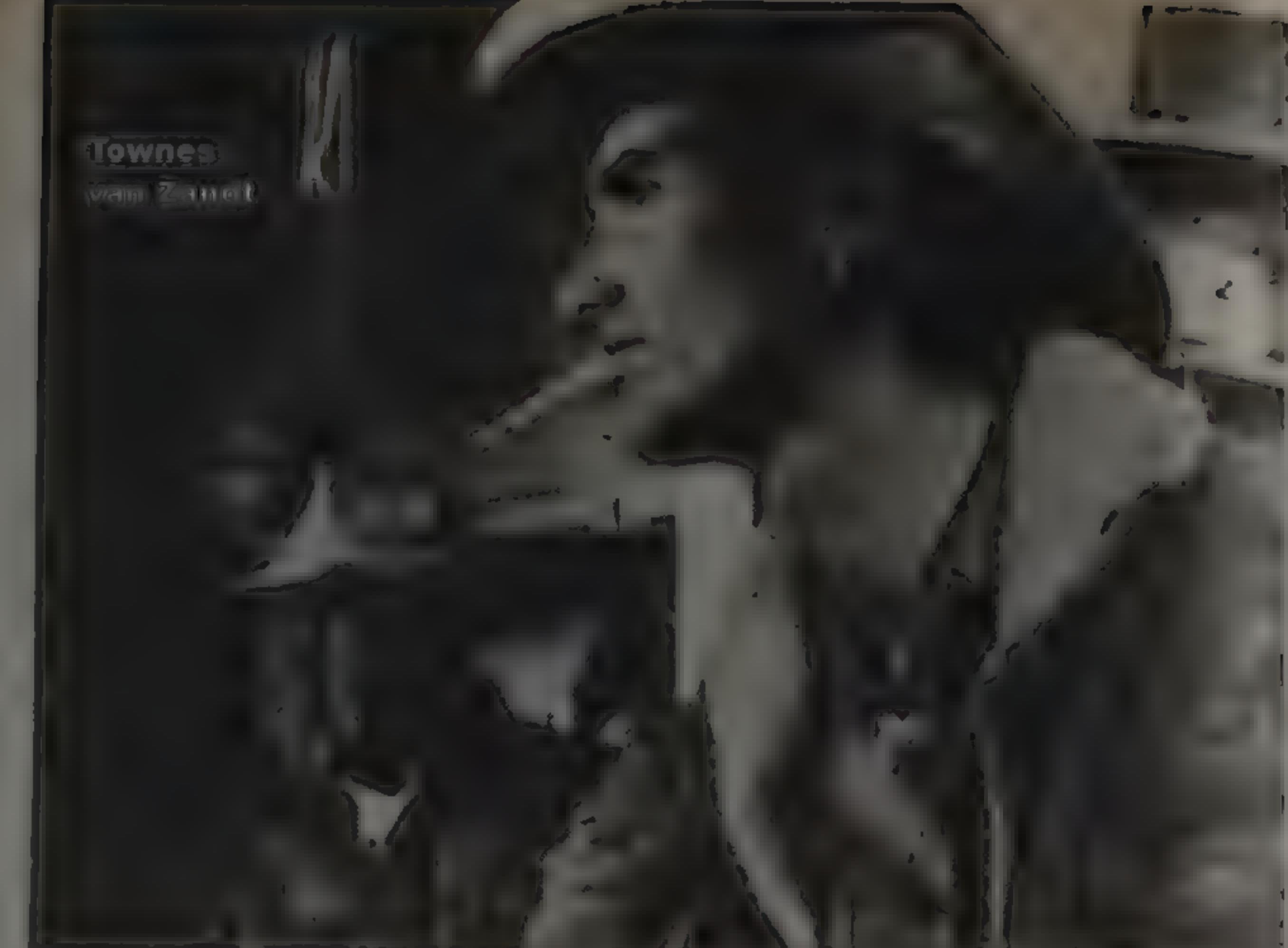
REVUE **DVD**

form a larger picture. Scenes featuring the musicians are separated by roaming highway shots (some filmed over Coe's shoulder as he races his tour bus across the state to a show at a Tennessee prison), punctuating the desire for freedom that recurs in so many of the songs on the soundtrack.

Thematically, the heart of the film lies in the scenes in Big Mack's Wigwam Diner, where the aging proprietor ruminates sadly on the state of country music. He suggests that people like Johnny Cash, who were once the heart and soul of the genre,

had by that time "shot their wad." The film supports this notion by keeping the camera away from anyone more popular than the Charlie Daniels Band. Reportedly, Willie Nelson expressed interest in taking part, but Szalapski turned him down in favour of focusing on these lesser-known songwriters and the community they formed.

DESPISE SOME GREAT SCENES, like one in which Van Zandt takes us on a guided tour of his property, or another where we see Clark building a guitar in his home workshop, *Heartworn Highways* is a showcase for the music. Songs tumble out of the musicians wherever they go and the soundtrack reflects that spontaneity. No prerecorded music tracks were used in the film, with each song performed live for the camera. In part, this was a necessity, since at the time only a few of the film's subjects had actually released albums (it would be nearly a decade before Steve Earle recorded his first one), but this limitation only adds to the mood of the piece. And there are some great performances here. It's hard not to tap along as Clark sings "Texas Cookin'" or get caught up in the rambling tale that Gamble Rogers tells before launching into "Black Label Blues"



(which is accompanied by a visual tour of the Jack Daniels distillery in Lynchburg, Tennessee). The most emotional moment, however, comes when Van Zandt performs "Waitin' Around to Die" in the home of his 79-year-old neighbour, Uncle Seymour Washington. Initially, Van Zandt occupies the foreground, with Washington just behind him. But, as the song's tale of darkness unfolds, the camera drifts in on Washington as tears begin to stream down the old man's face while Van Zandt sings, "I tried to kill the pain, bought some wine and hopped a train/Seemed easier than just waitin' around to die." It's hard to watch Washington nod in agreement with lines like this, but at the same time the music offers a

sort of catharsis for him, allowing the old man to share his pain and allowing us the opportunity to take part in this therapy.

Ultimately, this is a film about survival through music, be it for the convicts who watch Coe perform or the musicians themselves, several of whom come together in the end around Clark's table on Christmas Eve as Earle leads them in a sing-along of "Silent Night." One gets the feeling that as long as they have their music, these guys will be all right. And we just might be too. ☀

HEARTWORN HIGHWAYS

Directed by James Szalapski • Featuring Guy Clark, Townes van Zandt, Steve Earle and David Allan Coe • Now on DVD

The Katt's pyjamas

Robert Culp's inspired acting is what makes *The Greatest American Hero* DVD set really fly

BY DARREN ZENKO

Believe it or not, it's just meeee-eee-eee-eee! Yeah, yeah... that's the song, that damned catchy theme song that burned up the *Billboard* charts in '81 and provided the memetic hook that, 24 years later, allows *The Greatest American Hero* to enjoy a position of prominence in our collective pop-cultural memory all out of proportion to the show's quality (intermittent, but tending toward poor) or duration (three-ish seasons). Even the most non-nerdy of those who were alive and watching television at the time can recall the basic elements: the red super-suit, the lost instructions, the large blonde perm. Now, as has happened with so many other half-lost dreams of childhood, the DVD Age turns '80s haze into '00s substance.

First up, the show turns out to be a telling snapshot of and gentle satire on the left-right politics of the Reagan years, with touchy-feely liberal

schoolteacher Ralph Hinkley (William Katt)—briefly and confusingly renamed "Ralph Hanley" after John Hinckley took his Foster-impressing potshot at the Gipper—being given a astoundingly powerful supersuit by aliens under the condition he work alongside right-wing, commie-hating, law-and-order by-the-book FBI man Bill Maxwell (Robert Culp). Ralph wears earth shoes and speaks fluent Progressive White Californian; Bill wears suits (and/or a conservative sports-casual look) and speaks in action-man clichés. Ralph wants to make a difference and help people. Bill believes the best and most im-

REVUE **DVD**

tant way of helping people is to quash the Communist Menace. Alternately aided and hindered by Ralph's attorney girlfriend Pam (Connie Sellecca, row!) and his special-ed class filled with a multiracial menagerie of the nicest, most polite "troubled youth" you could imagine, this unlikely pair have various semi-superheroic action-adventures.

Katt's the first-billed player, and the sight of his hairdo and gawky frame crammed into that red leotard is the series' iconic image, but it's Robert Culp who's the real star of the show. The bonus materials on the DVD include cast interviews, and in his seg-

ment Culp talks about reading the script, loving the lines and trying to build a realistic character around that dialogue, a mix of tough-guy talk, hawkish Cold War talking points and manly quips. He succeeds, and the result is a crazy person. Culp's Maxwell is a sweaty, harried, tooth-grinding psychotic, a collapsed or collapsing ego wrapped in protective layers of desperate role-playing. Desperately jealous of Ralph and his access to the suit's powers both known and unknown, Maxwell throws himself into a coaching role with a full-blown vicarious-living complex. Bouts of depression, violent acting-out, intense frustration when thwarted... Bill Maxwell's a real piece of work, and the incomparable Culp nails it all. His performance alone makes checking out these discs worthwhile.

UNFORTUNATELY, despite Culp's wonderful watchability, *The Greatest American Hero* gets boring quick. I've heard that the second season is more exciting, but here in the first the entertainment goes slack after only a couple of episodes. It's fun to watch Ralph's learning curve across episodes, to see his discovery and gradual mastery of the suit's myriad abilities in the absence of formal instruction, to watch him and Bill as they learn to

deal with and work with each other. But the stories themselves are no great



shakes either dramatically or comically. Run-of-the-mill crimes and prob-

lems get solved in a by-the-numbers manner distinguished from thousands of episodes of hundreds of series only by the supersuit gimmick. The problem is, there's no Worst American Villain around for Ralph to contend against, just a bunch of hoods and inept spies. Nothing, not even the (kind of dumb) space aliens whose idea this was in the first place is larger-than-life—death for any heroic action-adventure, even one with satirical intent.

The DVD set also includes *The Greatest American Heroine*, a pilot of sorts in which Ralph retires from superheroism (his public profile gets too high and the aliens tell him he can't wear the pyjamas anymore) and passes the spandex torch to a tree-hugging, baby-snuggling, sunshine-and-kittens Californian aerobics enthusiast—terrible stuff, but you can't tear your eyes away. Excluded from the DVD, however, is the original pop music soundtrack (with the exception of the essential theme song); the licensing costs for music, I guess, are prohibitively high. This wouldn't have been so bad if the substituted tunes weren't so terribly godawful, dragging the DVD edition of *The Greatest American Hero* down into a basement of cheesiness that it doesn't quite deserve on its own. ☀

III-fitting Jacket

Time-traveling Adrien Brody thriller shamelessly exploits Gulf War Syndrome

BY COLLEEN ADDISON

The first Gulf War's been over for a decade, but it lingers on. Did you tie up your grandmother? Bash your girlfriend's brains? Of course! You've got Gulf War Syndrome, the hottest disease of the new millennium, right after carpal tunnel syndrome (which I actually have, so don't knock it). Or maybe you're just a plain raving lunatic.

Er, not to downplay postwar trauma. Warfare (I assume) provides one of the most intensely stressful situations imaginable; it stands to reason some might be a big shaken by the experience. But as a Hollywood trope, it has been done to death. Here's a note to all good little directors: if you're going to mention Gulf War Syndrome, it might be an idea to talk about the Gulf War! And look! Who knew? There's another war happening right now! Amazing!

Sadly, *The Jacket*, a new psychological thriller directed by John May-

bury, is more interested in showing soldiers turning into psychos. It begins with a few shots of an Arab landscape (in nightvision green, naturally), a bitter sergeant or two and voilà, our hero Jack Starks (Adrien Brody) is a nut. Off we rush, happily abandoning Iraq for scene two: the Mental Hospital, circa 1993. Jack has been imprisoned there after being charged with murder. Alas, the hospital isn't the finest example of the American healthcare system, with the head, Dr. Becker (Kris Kristofferson), self-medicating away, washing down his many doses of

REVUE THRILLER

suspicious white pills with a drink or three. Curiously, no one seems too upset by this habit, which I am really hoping is an utter breach of medical protocol. Even when the nice Dr. Lorenson (a sad-eyed Jennifer Jason Leigh) confronts Becker, she completely ignores the bottle swinging openly from his hand.

It seems that evil, drunk and stoned Dr. Becker has come up with a revolutionary treatment, whereby Starks, all buckled up into a straitjacket, is shoved into a morgue drawer. Um, why? Who cares! What it does do is propel Starks forward to 2007

(thus nicely skipping over—hopefully—the current war and avoiding the need to address any of those ugly political themes). There he meets Jackie (Keira Knightley, who, one suspects, took the job merely for the chance to speak in an American accent, since the role is your standard wounded woman, complete with black eye makeup and the odd drink). Between moans about how hard life is (mommy Jean, a tired Kelly Lynch, was a drunk), Jackie informs him of his death, back in 1993, four days after his first dose of drawer.

THE MOVIE SHOWS some promise here: time is short and suspect numero uno is the good (er, bad) doctor. On the way, though, the film detours dreadfully, with Starks playing guardian angel to all the bitter girls headed for Hell. Yes, he brings hope to the Nice Doctor and love to Jackie and her mom. Just a few words to the Jean of 1993 and she's a changed woman, overcoming in an instant what, judging from the rest of Lynch's performance, seems like years of

drinking and smoking. Jackie's transformed before that too by that Hollywood panacea commonly known as "sex with the leading man," her hard life drifting away in postcoital bliss.

And Nice Doctor learns that risks can be taken. She miraculously cures the child she has been working with (a very good Daniel Craig, who manages to convey his character's problems while just staring blankly at the tube, a task that's probably harder than it looks) with a dangerous procedure she'd been afraid to try.

Oddly, the future doesn't look too much different for Starks and crew. But hey, neither will ours. Come 2015, there will be a whole new crop of vets, all going bonkers from their own Gulf War Syndrome. This is bad enough, but now we know there will be a whole new crop of movies just like this one. ♦

THE JACKET

Directed by John Maybury • Written by Massy Tadjedin • Starring Adrien Brody, Keira Knightley, Kris Kristofferson and Jennifer Jason Leigh • Opens Fri, Mar 4

pieces of the genre (but which has already been released separately).

THIS LEAVES *White Heat*, which is so good that you practically can't describe it. Made almost 20 years after *The Public Enemy*, it features a pudgy, aging Cagney as the most psychotic gangster ever, a sociopath who grins while he shoots people for the fun of it. But this guy also suffers from headaches so severe they make him scream and writhe on the floor, only curable when he sits in the lap of his mother, a gangster just as tough and ruthless as he is. As with *The Roaring Twenties*, *White Heat* sees the gangster as the emblem of an earlier, simpler time, and primitive Cagney is here pitted against the technology of federal bureaucrats tracking him with radio signals. This maniac is in the end a bizarre kind of populist hero. The final scene, where he stands atop a huge gasoline storage tank and shouts "Top of the world, Ma!" before going up in a giant fireball, is stunning.

I should just add that the extras with this package are way better than usual. Of course, nobody says anything truly critical about the movies, but along with some duds you have real film scholars like Dana Polan and Robert Sklar giving voice-over commentaries. Best of all, there's a great collection of newsreels, cartoons and (especially) short subjects from the period to help reproduce the original moviegoing experience. ♦

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Jack Matthews, New York Daily News

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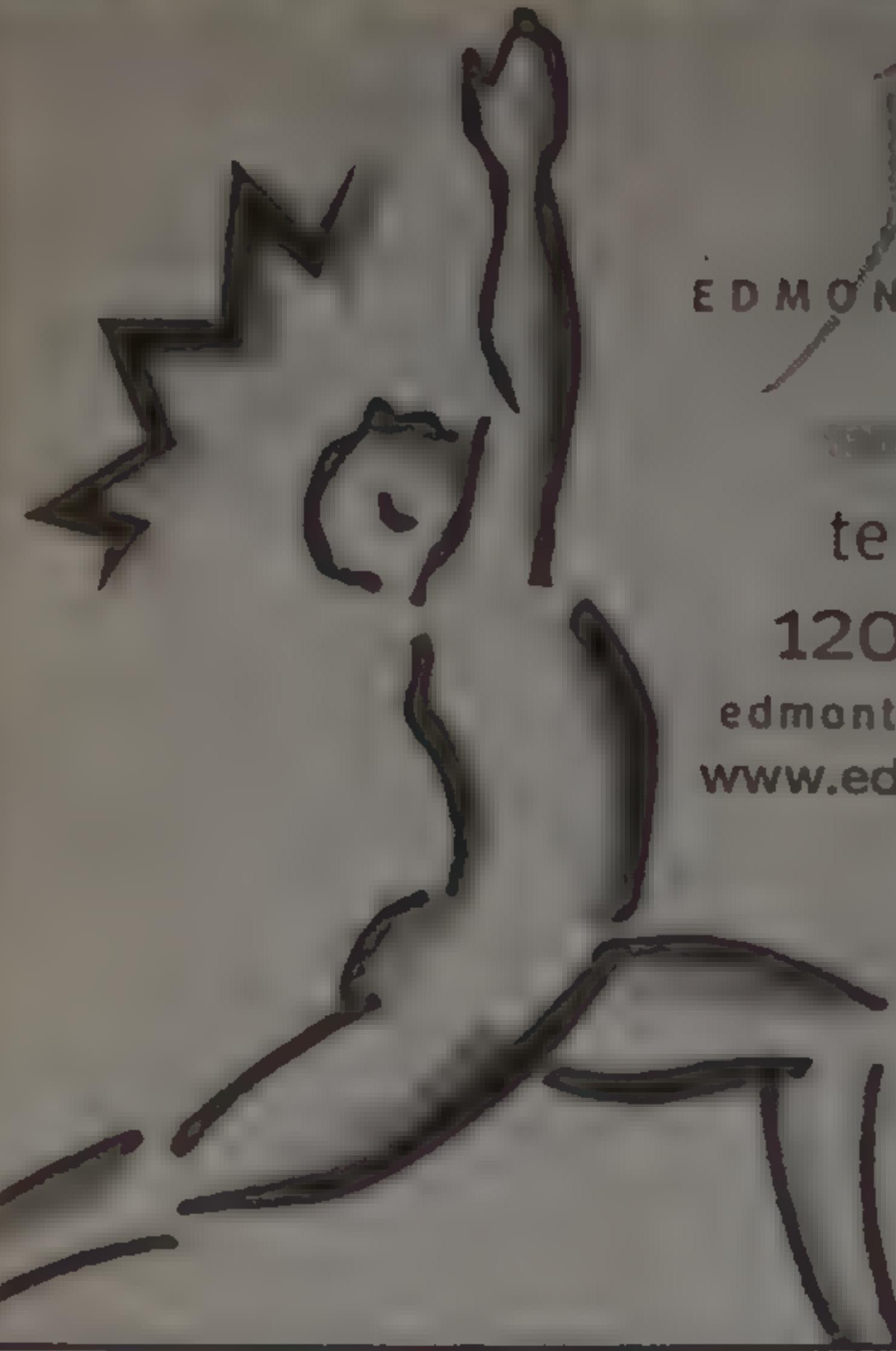
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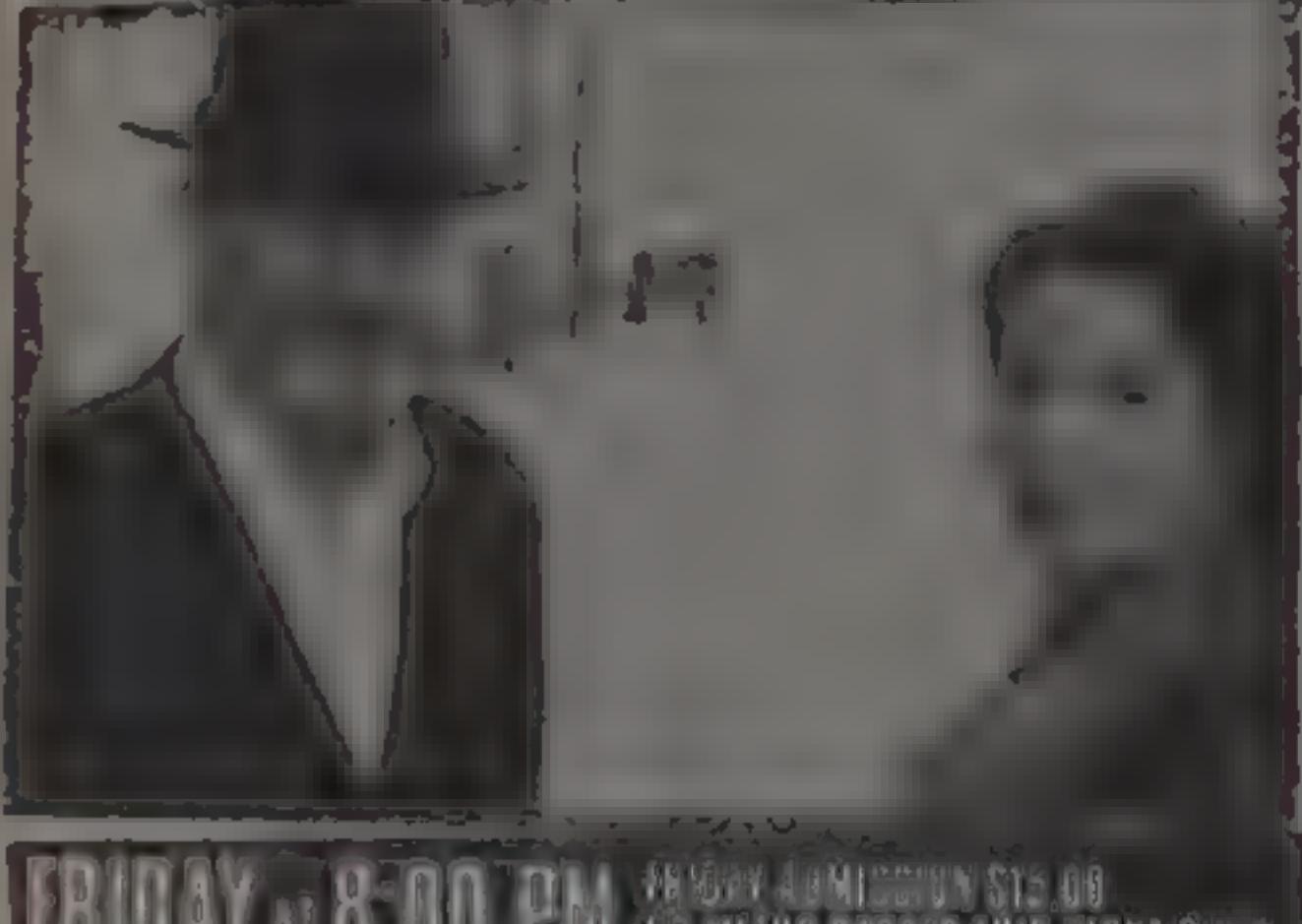
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FILM WEEKLY

THIS WEEK'S NEW MOVIES

Be Cool John Travolta, Uma Thurman, Vince Vaughn, Cedric the Entertainer and the Rock star in *The Italian Job* director F. Gary Gray's sequel to the 1995 comic crime caper *Get Shorty*, in which debt collector-turned-movie producer Chili Palmer tangles with egocentric singers, eccentric promoters and the Russian mob after deciding to move into the music business. Based on the novel by Elmore Leonard.

Champion Kirk Douglas, Arthur Kennedy and Ruth Roman star in *The Harder They Fall* director Mark Robson's 1949 pugilistic drama about an ambitious boxer who will stop at nothing, including betraying his family and loved ones, in order to climb to the top of the fighting world. Based on the short story by Ring Lardner. Provincial Museum Auditorium (102 Ave & 128 St); Mon, Mar 7 (8pm)

Daniel and the Superdogs Matthew Harbour, Annie Bovard, Patrick Coyote and Claire Bloom star in *Pouvoir Intime*

director André Mélançon's family film about an 11-year-old boy who deals with the recent death of his mother by pouring his heart into training an abandoned mutt for a prestigious dog show.

The Edmonton Celtic Film Festival A selection of recent films by Irish directors and/or writers. Featuring: *The Boys and Girls From County Clare* (dir: John Irvin); Fri, Mar 4 (8pm); *The Ghost of Roger Casement* (dir: Alan Gilsean); Sat, Mar 5 (7pm); *The Fifth Province* (dir: Frank Stapleton); Sat, Mar 5 (9pm); *Cinegael Paradiso* (dir: Robert Quinn), *Yu Ming Is Ainn Dom* (dir: Daniel O'Hara) and *Fluent Dysphasia* (dir: Daniel O'Hara); Sun, Mar 6 (6:30pm); *Spin the Bottle* (dir: Ian Fitzgibbon); Sun, Mar 6 (8:15pm). Zeidler Hall, *The Citadel*

The Jacket Adrien Brody, Keira Knightley, Kris Kristofferson and Jennifer Jason Leigh star in *Love Is the Devil* director John Maybury's psychological thriller about a Gulf War veteran who must use his newly acquired ability to shift in and

out of different time frames in order to clear his name after being imprisoned for a murder he didn't commit. Read Colleen Addison's review on page 41.

The Pacifier Vin Diesel, Lauren Graham, Faith Ford and Brittany Snow star in *Bringing Down the House* director Adam Shankman's family comedy about a tough-as-nails elite Navy SEAL who meets his match when he is assigned to babysit the five out-of-control children of an assassinated scientist working on vital government secrets.

The Sacrifice Erland Josephson, Susan Fleetwood and Valerie Mairesse star in *Andrei Rublev* director Andrei Tarkovsky's austere moving 1986 masterpiece about a former actor and critic who, in the wake of a nuclear holocaust, offers his life to God in hopes of redeeming mankind. In Swedish and French with English subtitles. Showing with local director Aaron Munson's short film *Fixation*. Zeidler Hall, *The Citadel*; Thu, Mar 3 (7pm)

GARNEAU
theatre

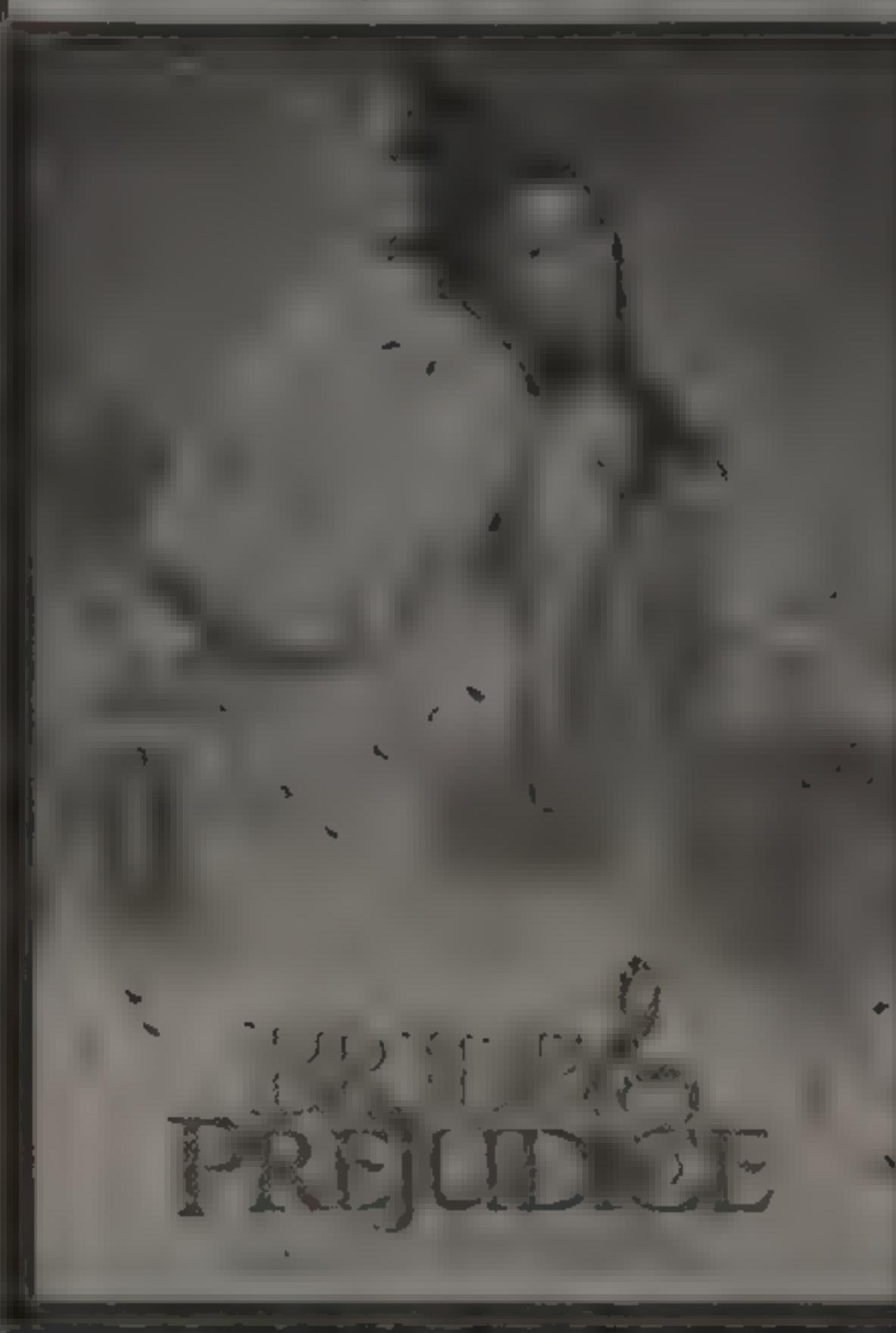
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Sat & Sun Matinee 2:00 pm
•PG (mature theme)

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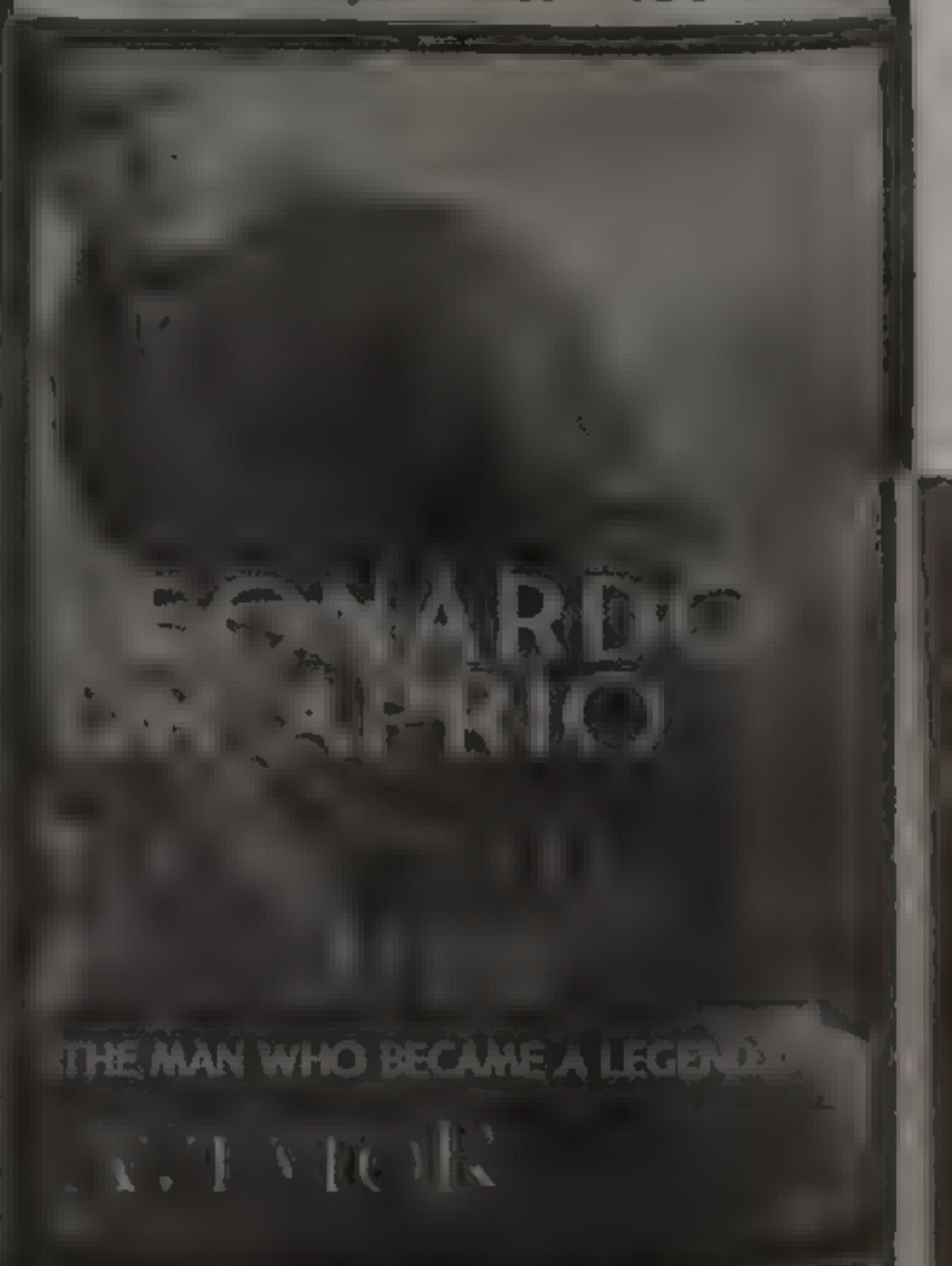
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•PG (mature content, not recommended for young children)

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MILLION DOLLAR BABY

PG

Mature theme, not recommended for young children
Daily 7:00 9:30 Fri Sat Sun 1:00 3:30

BE COOL

14A

Coarse language. Daily 7:00 9:15
Fri Sat Sun 1:00 3:30

THE PACIFIER

PG

NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

CURSED

14A

Gory violence throughout. Daily 7:10 9:20

Fri Sat Sun 1:10 3:20

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WETASKIWIN

THE AVIATOR

PG

NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

BE COOL

14A

Coarse language. Daily 7:00 9:15

Fri Sat Sun 1:00 3:30

THE PACIFIER

PG

NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

CURSED

14A

Gory violence throughout. Daily 7:10 9:20

Fri Sat Sun 1:10 3:20

CINEMA GUIDE

CITY CENTRE

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BE COOL

14A

Coarse language. Daily 1:00 3:50 7:00 10:00

THE JACKET

14A

Mature theme, disturbing content

Daily 1:20 4:10 7:20 10:10

HITCH

PG

NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

DAILY 1:10 4:00 7:10 9:55

SIDEWAYS

18A

Sexual content. Daily 12:40 3:35 6:40 9:40

MILLION DOLLAR BABY

PG

Mature content, not recommended for young children.

DAILY 1:15 4:20 7:30 9:45

CONSTANTINE

14A

Horror violence throughout. Fri-Sun Tue-Thu 12:45 3:40

6:45 9:35 Mon 12:45 3:40 9:45

MAN OF THE HOUSE

14A

DAILY 1:40 4:20 7:15 9:45

BLADE: TRINITY

14A

DAILY 1:30 4:30 7:30 10:15

WEST MALL B

WEST MALL B

THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE

MILLION DOLLAR BABY

PG

Fri-Sun 2:30 4:30 6:50 Mon-Thu 4:30 6:50

Mature content, not recommended for young children
Daily 12:30 3:45 7:10 10:10

BLADE: TRINITY

Frightening scenes, not recommended for young
children. Daily 5:30 10:00

FAT ALBERT

Crude content, cartoon violence throughout. Daily 1:00

WHITE NOISE

Crude content, cartoon violence throughout. Daily 12:30

OCEAN'S TWELVE

Crude content, cartoon violence throughout. Daily 1:45 4:10

ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

Crude content, cartoon violence throughout. Daily 2:00 4:50 7:15 9:45

THE INCRIMINATED

Crude content, cartoon violence throughout. Daily 4:00 6:30 9:00

THE JACKET

Crude content, disturbing content. Daily 1:35 4:00 6:30 9:00

BE COOL

Crude content, disturbing content. Daily 4:00 6:30 9:00

IN GOOD COMPANY

Crude language. Daily 2:00 4:40 7:05 9:25

THE WEDDING DATE

Crude language. Daily 4:40 7:05 9:25

THE WEDDING DATE

Crude language. Daily 4:40 7:05 9:25

SPANGLISH

Crude language, mature theme. Daily 4:10 6:55 9:30

THE PACIFIER

Crude language, mature theme. Daily 4:30 7:00 9:35

THE JACKET

Crude language, disturbing content. Daily 4:30 7:00 9:35

THE JACKET

Crude language, disturbing content. Daily 4:30 7:00 9:35

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Lassos and red-hot lovers

Kill Your Television hopes to rope in audiences with Sam Shepard's sexy *Fool for Love*

BY PAUL MATWYCHUK

Sam Shepard begins the script of *Fool for Love* with a stage instruction commanding that the play "be performed relentlessly without a break." That's also a good description of the work ethic of Kill Your Television, the Edmonton theatre collective who are currently in the midst of preparing their fifth annual production and who show no signs of slowing down anytime soon.

The company (the brainchild of director Kevin Sutley and actors Nathan Cuckow and Chris Fassbender) established their basic template with their 2001 production of Eric Bogosian's *Suburbia*: take an edgy Off-Broadway script full of good roles for young local actors, get Sutley to direct it, put some effort into beefing up the production values, unveil it in February and market it aggressively to hip theatregoers as well as the kind of young audiences who otherwise would be getting their entertainment from whatever indie-rock show was going on that weekend. (*Suburbia*, in fact, was staged not in a theatre, but in the New City Suburbs.) The formula couldn't have been more successful: KYT's first three productions, *Suburbia*, *R&J* and *Stop Kiss*, all won Sterling Awards for Outstanding Production by a Collective. Their streak was finally broken last year when their retro-'80s comedy/drama *This Is Our Youth* was defeated by *The Winter's Tale Project*.

"Actually," Cuckow confesses, "I was kind of hoping we wouldn't win for *Stop Kiss*. It was starting to get.... I mean, when that sort of thing starts happening, there's this whole expectation that gets created, and it's not about that for us. The Sterlings should be about encouraging emerging artists especially, and we're getting to the point where, while getting awards and nominations is really great, we want to see other groups come forward and make stuff happen—and to get acknowledged for their work when credit is due."

WELL THEN, let's give Kill Your Television some credit for tackling *Fool for Love*—one of the more challenging plays from Sam Shepard, a playwright whose volatile cocktail of dynamic staging, woozy Marlboro Man poetry, tortured melodrama and surreal comedy is hard theatrical liquor indeed. (Even the great Robert Altman had a hard time figuring out how to wrestle the play to the ground when he directed the film version in 1983—and he had Shepard himself in the cast to help him out.) The play is set in a pitifully seedy motel—named, with hilarious inappropriateness, the "El Royale"—situated somewhere in the ass-end of the Mojave Desert. It's here that Eddie (Nathan Cuckow), an itinerant Hollywood stuntman, and May (Daniela Vlaskalic), a restless slattern in the Erskine Caldwell mold, have decided to play out the latest chapter in their 15-year-long on-again-off-again-on-again love affair. While Eddie's latest lover, known only as "the Countess," circles the motel parking lot in her Mercedes-Benz, May waits for her new boyfriend Martin (Kevin Corey) to show up and take her to the movies. Meanwhile, watching the whole drama unfold is the unseen,

spectral figure of an old man (Robert Corness) whose relationship to Eddie and May turns out to be more than merely voyeuristic.

"Daniela and I really wanted to work together," Cuckow says, "and it's a play that's really dear to Kevin Sutley as well. Plus, Sam Shepard hasn't been done in Edmonton in a really long time, and this is a play that's trying to do some of the same things Kill Your Television is trying to do: it's violent, it's passionate, it's funny, it's exciting. So we figured it was high time to bring him back."

The last Shepard play to be staged in Edmonton, if my disorganized files are to be trusted, was *Buried Child*, which played Studio

Fool for Love, it's not *Buried Child* but José Teodoro's 2001 Fringe hit *Slowly, an Exchange Is Taking Place*, in which his character also spent most of the play sitting apart from the action, reciting long monologues and only

semi-lucidly observing the damage his past actions have had on the present.

"That's my role in the Edmonton theatre community," Corness says with a wry laugh. "A monologuist who doesn't interact with anybody else."

IF THAT'S THE CASE, then Daniela Vlaskalic's role in Edmonton theatre is to play sexy dames stranded in dingy motels while two macho

"Loretta's a lot more confident about what she wants and needs," she says. "In this play, I think May is really at a loss, even in terms of whether she wants to be with Eddie anymore. No sooner has she gotten back on her feet than he walks through the door and everything falls to pieces again. It feels like she's spent most of her life either trying to get away from him or trying to get back together with him, and she really hasn't been able to put much thought into her actual life beyond that."

"That's what's interesting about this play," she continues. "When it originally opened, much of the criticism of it complained that the play ends pretty much at the same point where it started, but I don't agree with that at all. I think that by the end of the play, May's made a real step forward. It's not that she's never going to see Eddie again, but she's made a genuine choice to move forward with her life."

"That's a theme that crops up in a lot of our shows," says Cuckow. "In *Suburbia*, in *Stop Kiss*, in *This Is Our Youth*, you've got characters who are stuck in a certain position and who make a major decision by the end of the play to change their life."

I suppose that sounds like I've just given away the ending of the story, but trust me—there are plenty of narrative bombshells in this thing that you can detonate on your own. "It's strange," Vlaskalic says. "Everyone's heard of this play, everyone's conscious of the title, but no one can really tell you what it's about or what happens in it. And yet people seem really fascinated by it."

THAT MAY HAVE something to do with the timeless appeal of its dime-novel imagery—the sun-baked desert at dusk, the motel in the middle of nowhere, the lusty gal climbing the walls of her room, the cowboy drifter with a lasso at his hip showing up and stirring up trouble (Kevin Corey, who got fairly proficient with a rope while growing up on a farm, has been helping Cuckow practice his lasso skills ever since October. "It's all in the wrist," Cuckow says. "You know, I've been practising in this park near my apartment, and you'd be amazed at how many people want to come up and talk to you when they see you playing with a lasso.")

And there's also just something about stories about outlaw lovers so young and sexy and passionate that they can barely keep their clothes on around each other that never gets old—Eddie and May belong to the same proud, promiscuous tradition as the lovers in *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Gun Crazy*, *You Only Live Once*, *The Fugitive Kind* and *Wild at Heart*. "They're totally dysfunctional," Cuckow says, "but I also believe that Eddie loves May and he'd do anything for her."

"But it's not like they can go to counseling either," Vlaskalic adds.

"No, but I think everyone would love to have that deep level of passion in their lives," Corness says. "I think that's what people are really looking for—not the meaning of life necessarily, but the experience of being alive."

"It's just great to be able to dive into something this sexy and passionate and no-holds-barred," Vlaskalic concludes. "It's the type of theatre I like to watch, and so actually being inside the play is even better." ☀

FOOL FOR LOVE

Directed by Kevin Sutley • Written by Sam Shepard • Starring Nathan Cuckow, Daniela Vlaskalic, Kevin Corey and Robert Corness • The Roxy (10708-124 St) • Mar 3-13 • 453-2440



Theatre in 1999 in a production starring John Wright, Steve Pirot... and Robert Corness. "I love the way Shepard writes dialogue," Corness says. "He really writes the way people speak—the words come out in a natural rhythm, I find. And of course I love the intensity of his writing—I've never seen a boring Sam Shepard play." Actually, though, if there's a precedent in Corness's work for his role in

idiots fight over her. It was Jeff Page and Chris Bullough who competed for her attention in *Featuring Loretta*, the 2002 Fringe success that traveled to Ottawa the following year for the first Magnetic North Theatre Festival; this time it's Nathan Cuckow and Kevin Corey who she has to choose between. But Vlaskalic thinks that the similarities between the two situations, while striking, are only superficial.

This is heart Core

Cornelia Osztovits's lifelong pulmonary obsession pumps life into Core

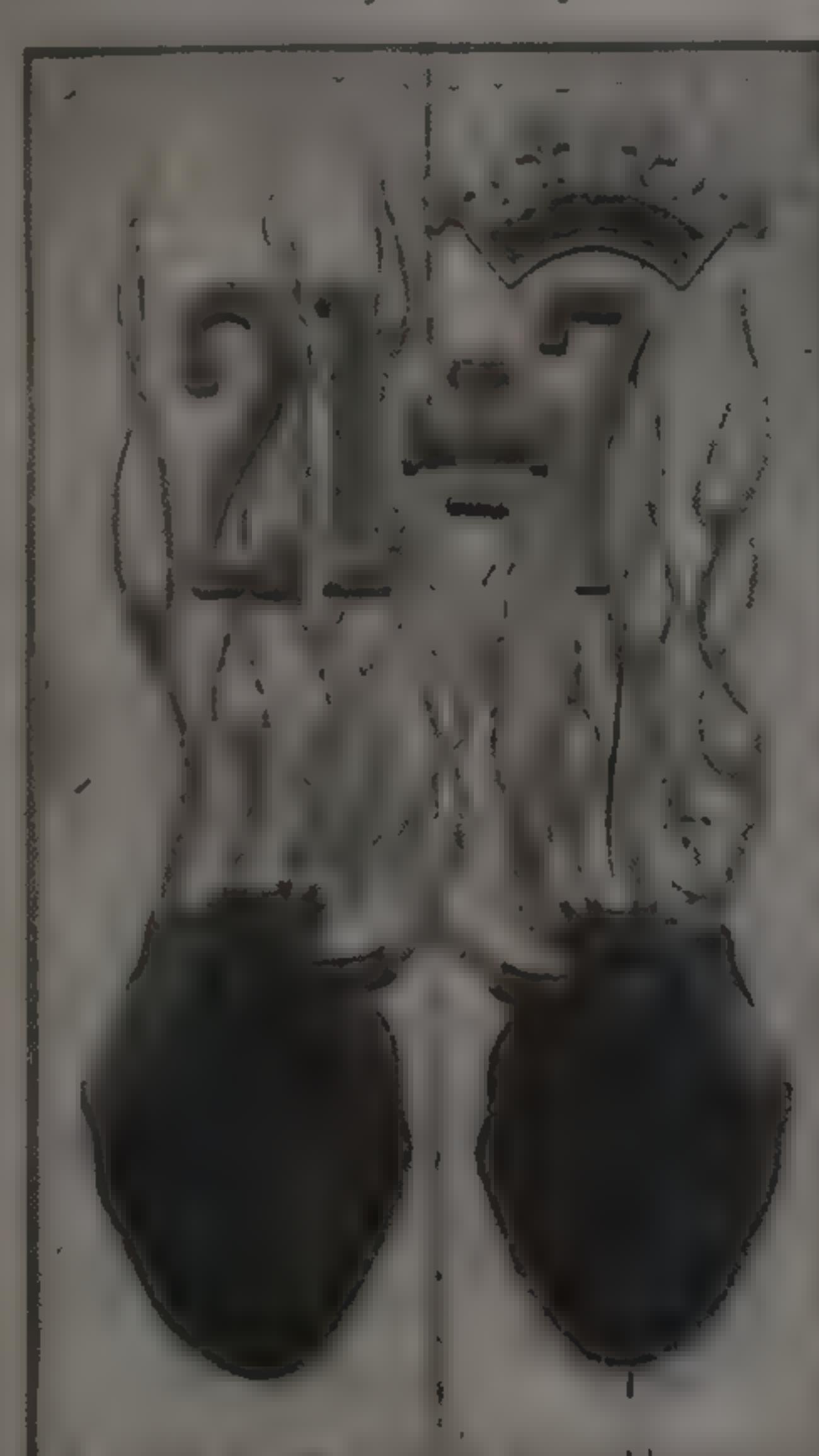
BY AGNIESZKA MATEJKO

Cornelia Osztovits has had an unusual family tradition for two generations. "I've collected the heart since childhood," explains the artist, whose devotion to the heart is so complete that she has even had one tattooed to her arm. "I have keyring hearts, slinky hearts, heart door knobs, drawer handles, heart-shaped bows," she says. "I had my glasses ped like hearts. My mother does too. She finds the wildest rock hearts! In fact, collecting rock hearts has almost turned into a family competition. ("I've had my fair share," Osztovits adds.) Her most treasured rock just appeared one day: "I was with a friend and we were walking alongside a lake, and the first rock I laid my eyes on on the beach was a heart shape. It was a special moment. It's moments like that that brighten everything. It was a gift from nature."

After collecting hearts for so many years, an interesting coincidence occurred, one that would profoundly alter Osztovits's perception of the heart and lead her to her *Core* exhibition. (This series of mixed media artworks is currently on display at the Steeps Tea House on Whyte Avenue and will be continued at the Fringe Gallery in November.) When Osztovits was hired as an artist on the ward at the University Hospital, the very first ward she was assigned to was the cardiac unit. It really hit home when I had a young heart patient how fragile the human heart is, how important it is for life," she says. "When you see a person with a weak heart, you see how much it affects them. They are no longer able to walk. It's definitely an eye-opener. It's such a fragile organ." It was as if her understanding of the heart had come full circle and, armed with this deepened understanding, Osztovits began to paint a delicate series of anatomical hearts, ones

PROFILE

VISUAL ARTS



find at least one that seems to have been made just for you. "I am sure," she says, "that as other people look at [the hearts], they see some similarities in their life."

CORE

By Cornelia Osztovits • Steeps Tea House (1111-82 Ave) • To Mar 7

Holy Body Tattoo thinks big

Vancouver dance company takes on the most *Monumental* undertaking of their career

BY JOSEF BRAUN

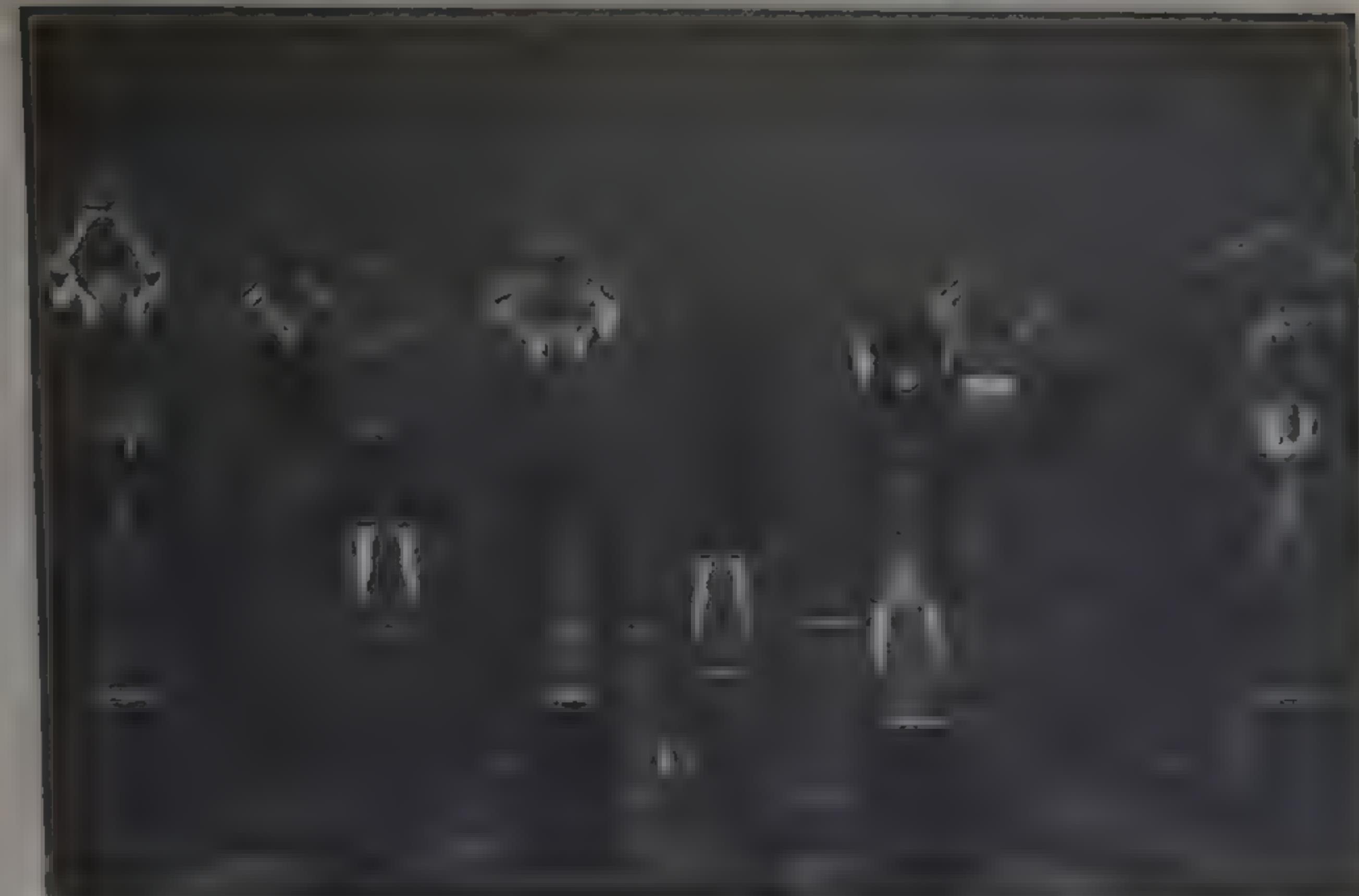
In a blurb on the Holy Body Tattoo website, the Vancouver-based company's newest multimedia dance work *Monumental* is described as "an elegiac investigation into the physical anxiety of urban culture." If you've seen Holy Body Tattoo's work, then you'll know this likely isn't some empty claim, some attempt to mask abstract noodling with bold-sounding concept. The primary distinction of Holy Body Tattoo's work in general has been their talent for physicalizing collective anxiety, the sort of anxiety that seems to silently course through a city, the sort that can build up until it becomes toxic, the sort that has precious few modes of expression.

When I saw HBT's *Our Brief Eternity* back in 1997, this anxiety found its expression in a trio of dancers pushing themselves off a floor as though summoned by a menacing external force, while the reverberations of their struggle and the pounding music pummeled me into my seat. I couldn't actually get up for several minutes after the house lights came up. But once I did, I felt lighter, like something had been extracted from my viscera without my knowing, although not without a little discomfort. It was a bit like how I imagine psychic surgery must feel like. I had a great time.

With *Monumental*, choreographers Noam Gagnon and Dana Gingras are in a sense revisiting the intensity of *Our Brief Eternity* as well as their earliest work *White Riot*, the three forming a trilogy. Yet *Monumental*'s more of a roller coaster ride where *Our Brief Eternity* was more akin to the drop of doom. There's modulation now, even moments of tenderness, perhaps bleeding their way in from the neo-tango of *Circa*, HBT's more romantic, intimate piece that played Edmonton in 2001.

Perhaps the added textures and alternating rhythms of *Monumental* are simply a result of the sheer number of personnel, nine dancers sharing the stage with film by William Morrison, texts by Jenny Holzer and a soundscape by Roger Tellier-Craig promising samples from music by Montreal's Godspeed You! Black Emperor. "Scale itself seems to come with this extra charge," Gagnon explains. "Repetition and accumulation take on a whole new profundity when you have nine people working at it as opposed to two or three."

WHEN HE AND GINGRAS were first dreaming up *Monumental*'s predecessors, they didn't have the resources to feasibly work with a company this large. "We were just young and



bold," Gagnon says. And poor. But fortunes have shifted in HBT's favour and allowed them to develop *Monumental* in ways they never could have previously imagined. "Some choreography arose from tasks we gave the dancers," Gagnon explains. "We asked them to hit the streets and spy on people until they could bring back five social gestures, five private gestures, five idiosyncratic gestures, five compulsive gestures. We'd look at all these, edit them,

it frames the landscape of the piece." Gagnon says, "it frames the people and how they relate. She's using a form of language that we experience on a daily basis, but using it to express things we tend to experience only on an unconscious level, things we can't really qualify, things we just sense."

Juxtaposition is crucial to any HBT piece, and the effect of any component should not merely reiterate the other, but strive for a harmony that only reveals the final whole when every piece is in sync. The interaction of each component seems especially significant to the theme that underlies *Monumental*. "Our title means monumental in a small way," Gagnon explains, "the way those tiny little gestures we propose everyday have an impact on the big picture. With this theme in mind, working on this piece has been really humbling, but also has made me more aware of my responsibility in what I contribute, how I respond and where the balance lies."

PREVIEW DANCE

develop phrases, and soon enough something is happening on a larger scale that says something about real people and not just our own experience. The sphere of influence on this piece was quite broad."

Holzer's contribution itself originates from an unusual form of public interaction, her phrases having appeared previously in public spaces as well as in book form. The phrases can be almost slogan-like, but have a cumulative effect of addressing invisible connections between an individual and the community they inhabit. "I think the beauty of her text is that

MONUMENTAL

Choreographed by Noam Gagnon and Dana Gingras • Performed by The Holy Body Tattoo • John L. Haar Theatre (Grant MacEwan Centre for the Arts) • Fri-Sat, Mar 4-5 • 420-1757



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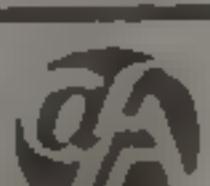
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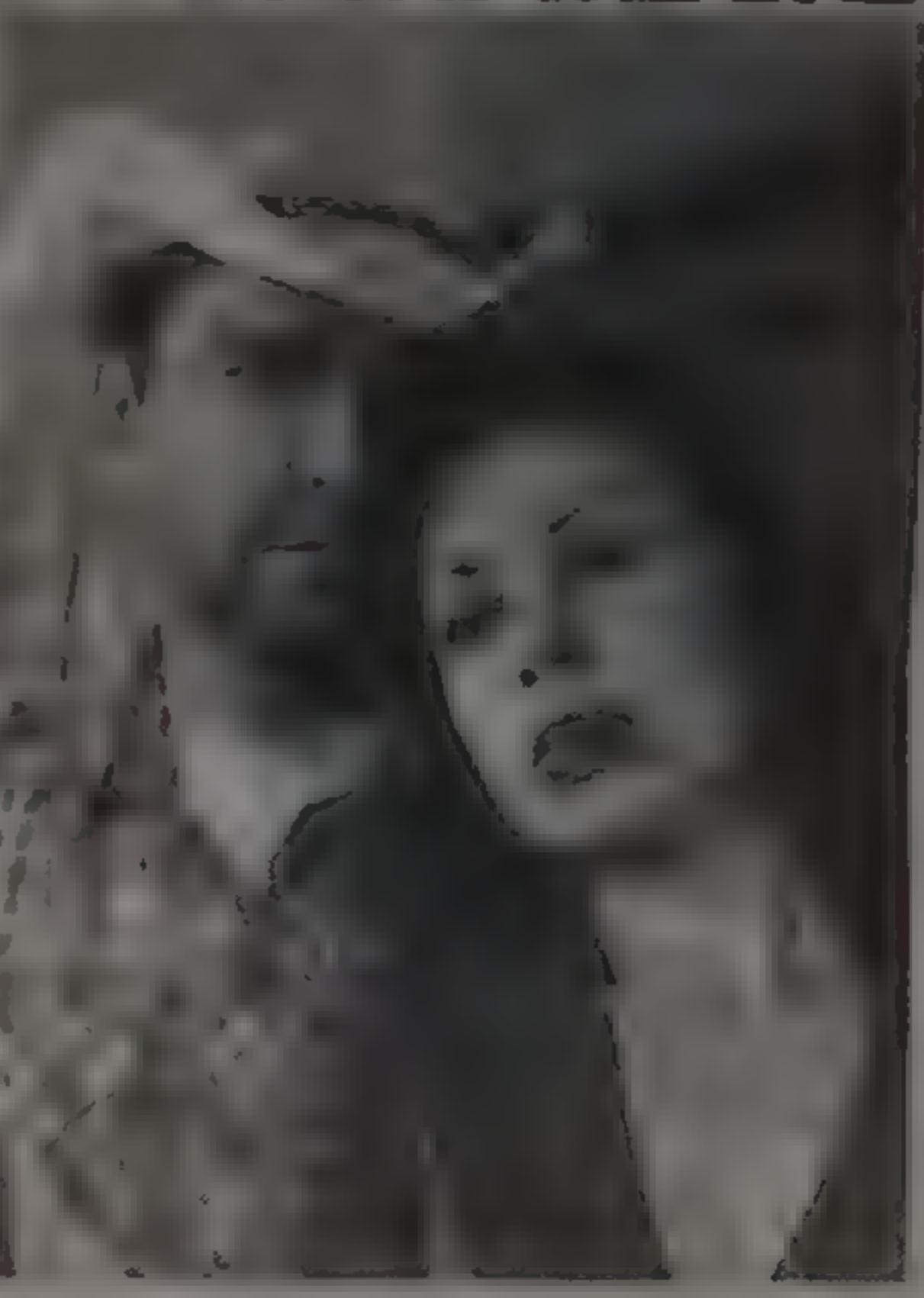
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VUEWEEKLY

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free
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BY ROB BREZSNY



Mar 21 - Apr 18

Jon Stewart, host of Comedy Central's *The Daily Show*, is a big star now. But on his way to the top, he has sometimes had a laidback attitude towards ambition. "As long as I can remember," he has said, "I wanted to sleep late, stay up late and do nothing in between." Believe it or not, Aries, I suggest you adopt an equally leisurely approach in the coming week. The best thing you can do to serve your burning desires in the long run is to explore the healing mysteries of being a lazy bum right now.



Apr 20 - May 20

Harvest time in March? That's what the astrological omens say for you Bulls. During the next few weeks you'll be reaping the fruits of all the seeds you've sown since your last birthday. One of the pesky weeds you didn't uproot will also be reaching full bloom, but the tiny bit of blight it engenders will be vastly overshadowed by the richness of your rewards. I suggest you throw a party or two to celebrate your bounty, express gratitude to your helpers and offer forgiveness to your doubters.



May 21 - June 20

Events in the coming week may be difficult

ARTS



theatre notes

BY DAVID BERRY

Rushing through the 4-Play

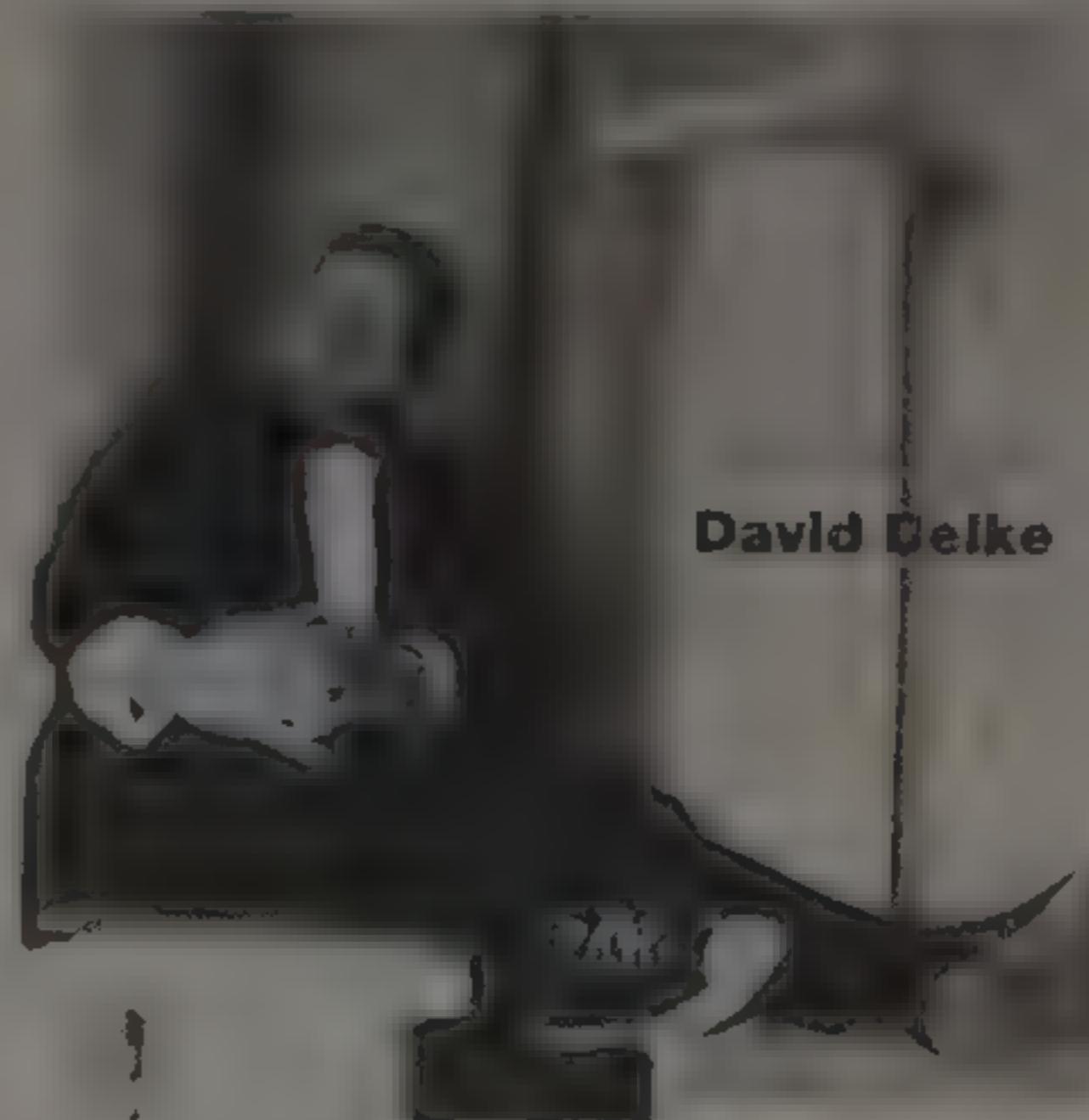
Over the Edge with 4-Play • Catalyst Theatre • Fri, Mar 4 • preVUE Most of us would feel a little daunted about the prospect of writing a play in three hours. David Belke, though, is quite happy to be doing it for the ninth time.

Belke is one of the six playwrights participating in this year's edition of Catalyst Theatre's annual fundraising event *4 Play*. The concept is simple: four teams of playwrights—two lone guns, Belke and *Vue Weekly* theatre reviewer Paul Matwyshuk and two duos, Wes Borg and Neil Grahn and Beth Graham and Daniela Vlaskalic—each write a play in the space of three hours. (They're each assigned the same opening line of dialogue as well as a prop that must be incorporated into the story.) From there, four design teams are given a mere two hours to design everything the plays need, from costumes to sets. Then four different directors take four local actors—who appear in every play—and spend an

hour rehearsing each play. Finally, the plays are presented to an eager audience, and four different critics review the often haphazard results.

All right, "simple" might not be the best description, but as Belke says, it is a lot of fun.

"It's challenging," he says. "You're asked to write a play in three hours, so that's always interesting, and it provides you with a certain adrenaline rush in those early hours of the morning. And it's just so wonderful to watch it all come together. Watching the designers at work, and the directors and the actors just creating this play right before your eyes—it's fascinating."



David Belke

As an eight-year *4-Play* veteran, Belke has learned a few things about pumping out a play in about the same amount of time it takes to get to Calgary. But one thing he takes care not to do is go in with a plot or a setting already in mind. "I don't really see the

for some of you to deal with. They will include intense encounters with peace, love, joy and understanding, as well as possible brushes with extravagant beauty, lyrical delight and inspiring discoveries. There will be a dearth of storylines that feature betrayal, abuse, pettiness, greed, extortion, disease and explosions. Therefore, Gemini, you should proceed with extreme caution if you're a jaded hipster who's suspicious of feeling really good. Ask yourself: "Am I ready to stop equating cynicism with insight? Do I dare take the risk that exposing myself to uplifting encounters might dull my intelligence?" If you doubt your ability to handle all the relaxing breakthroughs, you'd better take strong measures to evade them.



June 21 - July 22

"The average river requires a million years to move a grain of sand 100 miles," says science writer James Trefil. The work you've been doing on yourself these past two years, Cancerian, must sometimes have seemed as maddeningly gradual. The good news is that you are now in the last few months of this slow-motion, long-term project. If you can sustain your focus, you'll finish up around your birthday, having created such a strong inner sense of sanctuary that you will forever after be able to feel at home in the world no matter where you are.



July 23 - Aug 22

I have a tricky assignment for you this week, Leo. It will require you to display an open-hearted curiosity as you live on the edge of your understanding. It will ask you to be cheerful and optimistic as you question as many of your certainties as you can. Your challenge is to embody the attitude suggested by Caroline Myss in this passage from her CD, *Spiritual Madness: The Necessity of Meet-*

ing God in Darkness: "The moment you come to trust chaos, you see God clearly. Chaos is divine order versus human order. Change is divine order versus human order. When the chaos becomes safety to you, then you know you're seeing God clearly."



Aug 23 - Sept 22

In the coming week, people may have a lot to tell you about what you shouldn't think, how you shouldn't act and whom you shouldn't hang out with. Their counsel will be useful mostly in its revelations about them. If I were you, I wouldn't actually heed much of what they say. What you should trust, though, is your calm, lucid inner voice, especially when it gives you intuitions about what you shouldn't think, how you shouldn't act and whom you shouldn't hang out with. This is an ideal time to get clearer about the life you don't want to live.



Sept 23 - Oct 22

Spankings can raise your intelligence, reports the *Weekly World News*. Experiments by the Lucerne Institute of Psychological Research showed that college students did better on their exams after having their buns whacked. Increased adrenalin flow may have contributed to this surprising phenomenon, the psychologists speculated. "The adrenalin combined with the endorphins generated to minimize the pain, and together they opened up previously underutilized neural pathways—turning them into IQ hyperlinks," said one researcher.

I bring this up, Libra, because you've got a big life test coming up. If I were you, I'd be willing to try innovative measures to make sure you ace it, including maybe even having a Ping Pong paddle administered to your backside. The preparations that helped you through rites of passage in the past may not work this time.



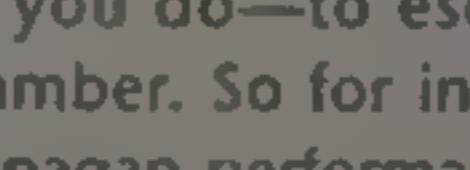
Oct 23 - Nov 21

In the coming days, Scorpio, you will almost certainly become pregnant—if not by literally conceiving a fetus, then by germinating the metaphorical equivalent. Do you have any idea about what's getting ready to sprout within you? I hope so, because if you do, it means you're attuned to the secrets that have been ripening in the fertile depths. But if you don't know anything about the new life that's stirring, drop everything and find out. You need to be a fully conscious participant in the gestation.



Nov 22 - Dec 21

"Americans live inside their own private echo chambers," says syndicated writer Matt Zoller Seitz, "endlessly revisiting things they already know they like and avoiding exposure to anything new and different." Your assignment this week, Sagittarius, is to ask yourself if you fit Seitz's description, and then—if you do—to escape your private echo chamber. So for instance, if you're a tattooed pagan performance artist, attend a rodeo or NASCAR race; if you're a Christian Girl Scout leader, listen to Ani DiFranco or Radiohead, or read Noam Chomsky's radical critiques of American foreign policy. If you're an atheistic intellectual, take a workshop in ecstatic Sufi dancing or a class in Buddhist meditation. I think you catch my drift.



Dec 22 - Jan 18

I'd love to see you reach out to the people who you think should have reached out to you by now. I'd love to see you heal rifts with former allies and rebuild bridges you burned down. Even if it feels like a slightly awkward compromise, I'd love to see you offer your services to X-factors and wild cards and loose cannons that aren't exactly

value of choosing something ahead of time and writing for that," he explains. "simply because, on one hand, you end up with an opening line that doesn't go anywhere and doesn't fit with the rest of the story."

"And also, it doesn't feel very sporting, you know?" he adds with another laugh. "The whole 4-Play experience is about that cauldron of creation, and you want to be in the moment, and be in that place and that world and that spot."

That's not to say Belke isn't coming prepared. "Usually I bring my college thesaurus and my rhyming dictionary and my works of Shakespeare, too," he says. "And also my copy of *Bartlett's Quotations*. You know, sometimes you need to look something up, and you don't have time to wander the room searching for inspiration, so sometimes you have to check some reference material for it."

And though Belke expects some stiff competition this year, he says winning one of the coveted handmade "Curling Award" trophies at the end of the night is never the point; instead, *4-Play* is all about the experience of putting yourself in a room and seeing what can happen. "Part of the fun," he says, "is watching what comes out of these creative brains and the sheer amazement of, 'Oh my god, it's good! Hopefully, the muses will be smiling, and I can get through this, but nonetheless, it's better than a jolt of coffee at the beginning of the morning, that's for sure."

making the best use of their powers. How about it, Capricorn? Are you willing to bend a little to gain a lot? Can you imagine giving more slack to flawed possibilities, hoping that your largesse will help them fix their flaws?



Jan 20 - Feb 18

The astrological omens are unambiguous: In the coming weeks, the entire universe will be conspiring to help you add to your assets, increase your value and acquire more resources. Does that mean you'll get a raise or inherit your great uncle's ostrich farm? Does it mean you'll enroll in a training program to upgrade your skills and expand your knowhow? Or does it mean you'll cultivate a previously underdeveloped part of your personality that will then become more attractive and desirable? I can't say for sure, Aquarius. How it all unfolds will depend on your priorities—and on how aggressively you cooperate with the universal conspiracy.



Feb 19 - Mar 20

In her book *For the Time Being*, Annie Dillard says that throughout history many people have thought civilization was on the verge of collapse. Around 300 BC, Hindus believed they were living in a "degenerate and unfortunate time" known as the Kali Yuga—the lowest point in the great cosmic cycle. In 426 AD, the Christian writer Augustine mourned that the world was in its last days. In the 1800s, renowned Hasidic Rabbi Nachman grieved for the world's "widespread atheism and immorality." Dillard offers more examples, concluding, "There never was a more holy age than ours, and never a less. There is no whit less enlightenment under the tree by your street than there was under the Buddha's bo tree." Go sit under that tree, Pisces. The time for your awakening is now at hand.

ARTS WEEKLY

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ARTSHAB STUDIO GALLERY 3 Fl, 10217-106 St (439-9532/423-2966) • Open: Thu 5-8pm or by appointment • **BEYOND OLYMPIA: THE ART, IT IS A CHANGING:** Artworks of the female form • Mar. 3-31 • Opening reception: Thu, Mar. 3 (5-8pm)

CENTRE D'ARTS VISUELS DE L'ALBERTA 9103-95 Ave (461-3427) • **INSPIRATION:** Artworks by Laura Watmough, Eva Hontela, Keith Nolan, Gisèle Grégoire and Aspen Mane Zettel • Mar. 4-15 • Opening reception: Mar. 4 (7-8:30pm)

EDMONTON ART GALLERY 2 Sir Winston Churchill Sq (422-6223) • Open Tue-Wed and Fri 10:30am-5pm; Thu 10:30am-8pm; Sat, Sun 11am-5pm. Closed Mon • **FROM NEAR AND FAR:** Artworks that explore Canada as a multicultural society • until May 23 • **BETWEEN BORDERS** Until June 19 • **REVEALING HIDDEN TREASURES:** Until March 27 • **RE: BUILDING THE WORLD:** Artists interpretation of architecture • until Mar. 15 • **19TH CENTURY FRENCH REALIST MASTERWORKS FROM THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA:** Mar. 12-May 29 • **19TH CENTURY FRENCH REALIST MASTERWORKS FROM THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA:** Mar. 12-May 29 • **ALL DAY SATURDAY:** Sat, Mar. 12; • **Curator's Tour** (2pm): Tour Masterworks of 19th Century French Realism from the National Gallery of Canada with John Collins; Sat, Mar. 12 • **Exhibition Tours** (1pm and 3pm): Tour *Revealing Hidden Treasures: Your Favourite and Rarely Seen Works from the EAG Vaults*; with Janzen; and *Re: Building the World* Sat, Mar. 12 • **Make It! Take It!** (1-4pm): Project with Davey Thompson; Sat, Mar. 12; • **Kids Draw Architecture:** A Place of My Own (1-4pm): With M.A.D. E. Members; Sat, Mar. 12 • **Visit with Artists:** Lecture Theatre; Alberta Society of Artists featuring lecture by Ilida Lubane; Thu, Mar. 10 (7pm); free • **Kitchen Gallery:** Artworks by David Janzen; until May 15 • **Children's Gallery:** *SPELLBOUND*; until March 20 • \$9 (adult)/\$6 (student/senior)/\$3 (child 6-12)/free (member/child 5 and under)

ELECTRUM DESIGN STUDIO 12419 Stony Plain Rd (482-1402) • Open Tue by appl. only, Wed-Fri 10am-5:30pm, Sat 10am-4pm, closed long weekends • **RURAL REFLECTIONS:** Artworks by Marilyn Rife • Until Mar. 6

EXTENSION CENTRE GALLERY 2nd Fl, 8303-112 St • Open: Mon-Fri 8am-4pm • **TRIAD:** Prints by Pat Jobb, Monika Koch and Rita Lock • Until Mar. 9 • Opening reception: Fri, Mar. 4 (6-9pm)

FAB GALLERY Room 1-1, Fine Arts Building, 112 St, 89 Ave, U of A Campus (492-2081) • Open Tue-Fn 10am-5pm; Sat 2-5pm • **THE ALCUIN AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN BOOK DESIGN IN CANADA, 2004** and **THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PRESSES BOOK JACKET AND JOURNAL SHOW, 2004** • Until Mar. 12 • Opening reception for both shows: Thu, Mar. 3 (7-10pm)

FRINGE GALLERY 85mt 10516 Whyte Ave (432-0240)

• Open: Mon-Sat 9:30-6pm • **METAMORPHOSIS:** Artworks by David Janzen; until Mar. 31

HARCOURT HOUSE 10215-112 St (426-4180) • Open

Mon-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 12-4pm • **ECHO SENSE:** Installation by Lynda Cronin; until Mar. 12 • **CHAIN**

MAKING: Installation by Suzanne Caines; Mar. 17-Apr. 16; opening reception: Thu, Mar. 17 (7-10pm)

FRONT ROOM: *IF THIS MOUTH COULD TALK:* Paintings by Cynthia Gardiner; until Mar. 12 • **GAME PLAN:** Paintings by Kim Sala; Mar. 17-Apr. 16; opening reception: Thu, Mar. 17 (7-10pm)

JASPER MUSEUM 400 Pyramid Lake Rd, Jasper (780-852-3013) • Open Thu-Sun 10am-5pm • **MOUNTAINS UNLIMITED:** Landscape paintings by Linda Wadley • Until Mar. 13

JOHNSON GALLERY 7711-85 St (465-6171) • Open

Mon-Fri 9am-5:30pm, Sat 10am-5pm • Artworks by

Yardley Jones, Linda Nelson, Meta Ranger, Al Robarge,

Andrew Besse, Jim Painter, Jack Ellis, George Toszak,

Pottery by Noburo Kubo • Through March

JOHNSON GALLERY 11817-80 St (479-8424) • Open

Mon-Fri 9:30am-5:30pm; Sat 9:30am-4pm • Artworks by

Glenda Beaver, Thelma Manary, Myles MacDonald,

Myma Wilkinson, Wendy Risdale, Jim Painter, and

African masks • Through March

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JOHNSON GALLERY 11817-80 St (479-8424) • Open

Mon-Fri 9:30am-5:30pm; Sat 9

EVENTS WEEKLY

Fax your free listings to 426-2889 or e-mail them to Glenys at listings@vweweekly.com. Deadline is Friday at 3pm.

CLUBS/LECTURES

EDUCATION CONFERENCE TRANSFORM YOUR SOCIETY Centre for Education, One Kingsway, 101 St, 109 Ave (944-5265, 944-3616) • Annual general meeting • Thu, Mar. 10 (6:30-8:30pm) • Free

ALTERNATE ENERGY SEMINAR Rm 5-142, Main Fl, 105 St. Bldg, Grant MacEwan Downtown Campus • Renovating older homes with Stephen Farrell • Tue, Mar. 8 (7pm) • Free

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS 7-8pm, 105 St; every Thu (6:30-8:30) • Organic Roots, 8225-122 St; every third Thu (6:30pm)

CANCER IS JUST A BULLY Organic Roots Food Market, Campus Towers, 112 St, 83 Ave • Public talk with Laurne Dunford • Tue, Mar. 8 (7pm)

EDMONTON COALITION AGAINST WAR AND RACISM (ECAWAR) Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, 10010-102 Ave, north doors (988-2713) • Planning meeting for an "end the occupation" march and rally • Sun, Mar. 6 (7pm) • Free

EDMONTON'S PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT Holiday Inn Express, 10017-179A St (496-6094) • Meeting to discuss changes for Place LaRue West Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan (NASP) • Tue, Mar. 8 (7pm)

EDUCATE CHILD MAINTENANCE AND ACCESS SOCIETY ETY Lion's Centre, 11113-113 St, Rm 2 (988-4015) • Monthly meeting discussing the issue of parental rights • Thu, Mar. 10 (7pm) • Free

ETS COMMUNITY CONFERENCE City Centre Campus of Grant MacEwan College, 10700 104th Ave (496-1611) • With speaker Michael Roschlau • Sat, Mar. 5 (9am-12:30pm) • Free

THE GREEN PARTY Hostelling International, 10647-81 Ave (482-5211) • Meetup • Thu, Mar. 10 (7pm) • Free

HOW TO GET YOUR LAND AND GARDEN OWNERSHIP John Janzen Nature Centre, 2000-143 St (496-2925) • Seminar with Carole Rubin • Sun, Mar. 13 (5:30pm) • \$15, pre-register

JASPER AVENUE: THE ROAD TO EDMONTON'S GROWTH AND IDENTITY Stanley A. Milner Library, Sir Winston Churchill Sq (492-4224) • Lecture with Dr. Frances Sympa • Thu, Mar. 3 (12:10-12:50pm)

LIVING POSITIVE www.edmlivingpositive.ca (1-877-975-9448/488-5768) • Edmonton Persons Living with HIV Society • Every Tue (7pm): Peer-facilitated support groups • Daily drop-in, peer counseling

MEDITATION • **Carnease United Place**, 11148-84 Ave (412-1006) Drop-in meditation with Gen Kelsang Phuntsok; every Thu (7-9pm); \$10 (donation) • **Diamond Way Buddhist Centre**, 4th Fl, 10314 Whyte Ave (455-5488) free meditations every Wed (8pm) • **Buddhist Meditation**, 10762 Whyte Ave (439-2492) Beginner Tibetan Buddhism; every Sun (7-9pm); until Mar. 14 • **City Arts Centre**, 10943-84 Ave; The Way of Life meditation, last Tue each month (7pm door) • **Transmission Meditation** Soilpoint Healing Centre, 10350-124 St (433-3342) every Tue, Thu, Sun (8:30-9:30pm); free

PERMACULTURE LANDSCAPE DESIGN FOR THE EARTH TINGS Concordia College North Campus, Rm 5-304, Schwerman Building (457-9519) • A sustainable approach to landscape design by Kam Adhead • Sun, Mar. 6 (12-2pm) • \$5

EDMONTON ENVIRONMENTAL CONGRESS International, 10647-81 Ave (454-6216) • Travel slide show and lecture by Gerry Paschen and Change for Children pro-

jects in Brazil presented by Patsy Ho and Lorraine Swift • Mar. 14

RURAL ROOTS YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE Trans-Alta Arts Barns, 10330-84 Ave (448-1505) • Youth conference to gain knowledge of communities, economies and the environment • Mar. 10-12 • \$30 (incl. breakfast and lunch)

SENATE DEFENCE COMMITTEE Shaw Conference Centre, Salons 5 and 6 • Meeting to demonstrate opposition to the Muscle Defence Programme • Mon, Mar. 7 (2:45-4:15pm) • Free

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN PEDIATRIC PLASTIC SURGERY 4th Humanities Centre, Rm 4-29, U of A Campus • Discussion on society, culture and politics; art/aesthetics; and the production of knowledge • Sat, Mar. 5 (10am-4pm) • Free

TOASTMASTERS • **St. Paul's Church**, 4005-115 Ave (476-6963) • Learn public speaking; every Thu (7-9pm) • **Baker Centre**, 10th Fl, 10025-106 St (477-2613) Upward Bound Toastmasters; every Wed (7pm) • **Norwood Legion**, 11150-82 St (456-3934) Norwood Toastmasters Club Weekly meeting about public speaking, and how to improve your communication and leadership skills; every Thu (8-10pm) • **Central Lions** 11113-113 St (405-6408/489-83) Enthusiastic Seniors Toastmasters meetings first and third Tue every month (1-3pm)

TRAVEL FOR REAL Myer Horowitz Theatre, (451-8000) • An evening of travel with Ian Wright • Tue, Mar. 8 (8pm door) • \$18 (adv); tickets available at Blackbird, Listen, TicketMaster, HUB, SUB, CAB, E.T.L.C. info desks, Mountain Equipment Co-Op

UNITE! THE NORTHERN LIGHTS, THE BOREAL FOREST V Wing Lecture Theatres, Rm 120, U of A Campus (492-5825) • Lecture on sustainable forest management in Canada: What are we sustaining? presented by Jim Fyles; Thu, Mar. 3 (4:30pm) • Lecture on the conservation beyond crisis management: a new model for boreal forests of Canada, presented by Fiona Schmiegelow; Thu, Mar. 10 (4:30pm)

VEGETARIANS OF ALBERTA Riverdale Community Hall, 9231-100 Ave (988-2713/469-1448) • Potluck • Sun, Mar. 13 (5:30pm) • \$2 (member)/\$3 (non-member)

WATER CONSERVATION METHODS Concordia College North Campus, Room S-304 in the Schwerman Building (457-9519) • Learn how to reduce water loss, and save on your water bills presented by environmental educator Kann Adhead • Sun, Mar. 6 (2-4pm) • \$5

THE WORLD WE WANT McKay Avenue School, 3 Fl, 10425-99 Ave (988-8194) • Understanding and Acceptance Across Differences: Public dialogue featuring speakers Douglas Roche and Raj Pannu • Sat, Mar. 12 (8:30am-4:30pm) • Pre-register by Mar. 9

MADELEINE SANAM FOUNDATION Faculté St. Jean, 8400 Mane-Anne Gaboury (91 St) Rm 3-18 (490-7332) • Program for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and harm reduction in French, English and other African languages • Every 3rd and 4th Sat (9am-5pm) • Free (member)/\$10 (non-member) • Pre-register

MAKING WAVES SWIMMING CLUB www.geocities.com/makingwaves_edm • Recreational and competitive swimming with coaching, beginners encouraged to participate. Socializing after practices • Every Tue and Thu

MEN TALKING WITH PRIDE (488-3234) • Every Sun (7pm): A safe, supportive, confidential discussion group talking about all gay related issues, for men at any stage of coming out • Free • talkingwithpride@hotmail.com

UNITE! EDMONTON ART GALLERY, 2 Sir Winston Churchill Sq (438-3872) • Silent art auction fundraiser for Tsunami victims in Asia. Music by DJ Synoflex • Mar. 4 (7pm) • Free

YARMAROK 2005 Ukrainian Youth Unity Complex 9615-153 Ave • Ukrainian Pre-Easter Bazaar presented by the Verkhovna Ukrainian Song and Dance Ensemble featuring Ukrainian food, craft fair/trade show, cultural displays, petting zoo, and Ukrainian song and dance • Mar. 5 (10am-5pm), Mar. 6 (11am-4pm) • \$3/children under 12 free

PRIME TIMERS (426-7019) • Meetings every second Sunday of the month at 3pm. A social group for gay/bisexual men over 40 and their friends

PRISM BAR AND GRILL 10524-101 St, back entrance (900-0038) • Lesbian and gay bar/restaurant

THE ROOST 10345-104 St (426-3150) • Open Sun-Thu

AGAPE Faculty of Education, U of A Campus • Sex, sexual, gender differences in education and culture focus group • Contact Dr. Andre Grace (andre.grace@ualberta.ca) for info

AXIOS (454-8449) • A support group, local chapter of the international organization of Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Rite Catholic Gay and Lesbian Christians

EDMONTON COMMUNITY CHURCH OF EDMONTON (429-2321) • Weekly non-denominational church services

PFLAG GLCCE, Suite 45, 9912-106 St (462-5958) • Meetings every third Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm • Support/education for parents, families and friends of lesbians/gays/bisexuals/transgenders

POLICE LIAISON COMMITTEE (421-2277/1-877-882-2011, ext. 2038) • Edmonton Police Service and the gay and lesbian community

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BOOTS AND SADDLES 10242-106 St (423-5014) • Large tavern with pool tables, restaurant, shows. Members only

BUDDY'S NITE CLUB 11725 Jasper Ave (488-6636) • Open daily 9-3, Fn 8pm • Mon: Amateur strip (12:30); Dj Alvaro, Ashley Love • Tue: retro, top 40 with Dj

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QUEER LISTINGS

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artist to artist**FREE•FREE•FREE•FREE•FREE****ARTIST/NON PROFIT CLASSIFIEDS**

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editing. Duplicate ads will not be published,
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glenys@vneweekly.com or drop off at 10303-108
St. Deadline noon the Tue before publication.
Placement will depend upon available space.

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Shelly's Dance Company 81750 50th Street
12n Dancers, 2pm Singers
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Call to Enter ArtsHub Studio Gallery features guest
artists, incl: Proposal (w/physical description, spe-
cial requirements); 10 slides/photos; CV; Artist
statement. Info ph Tim 423-2966.

The Alberta Society of Artists presents a lecture by
ASA life member Ilda Lubane. At the Edmonton Art
Gallery Lecture Theatre, Mar. 10, 7pm.

NextFest Visual Artist Call for Submissions:
Deadline: April 1st. Call Theatre Network @ 453-
2440 or www.atheroxy.com for more info.

Dance Auditions for Carnival Of Shrieking Youth
Emerging Artists Festival. Mar. 6, 1-5pm. PCL
Studio Theatre, TransAlta Arts Barns, 10330-84 Ave.
Ph 454-2865, e-mail: theatrequared@shaw.ca

Film actor Auditions for Carnival of Shrieking Youth
Emerging Artists Festival. Mar. 5, 1-5pm. e-mail: theatrequared@shaw.ca, ph 909-4976 for more info.

Opening casting calls for short film. No pay, just
play. Lead adult male & female. Mar. 15, 10am-
4pm. FAVA Bldg, Ortona Armoury, 97422-102 St

The Industsurreal Nutcracker (benefit for HIV
Edmonton) looking for musicians, artists, performers.
Phil 437-5014, e-mail: satoreye@shaw.ca

2 environmentally passionate actors wanted, 1 m,
1 f w/improv skills to play animal characters in
children's nature series pilot. e-mail: standing-beartails@telus.net

The Alberta Society of Artists call for membership.
Are you interested in curating shows, being part of
exhibitions, art education? Become a ASA
member, Ph (780) 426-0072,
e-mail: north@artists-society.ab.ca

Visual artists: Red Strap Market is now booking art
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Troupes etc. Rehearsal space available at Red Strap
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708-3241 for more info.

3rd Busker's Ball seeks buskers, street performers,
street artists to host a benefit concert for the
Parkland Institute. Bill 433-5159.

looking for models, actors, performers: planet ze
design center, 10055-80 ave, 428-3499, hrs. tue-fri
12-5 Sat 2-6 www.artoriumze.com

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Auditions for The Canadian College of
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A call for volunteers - Action for Healthy
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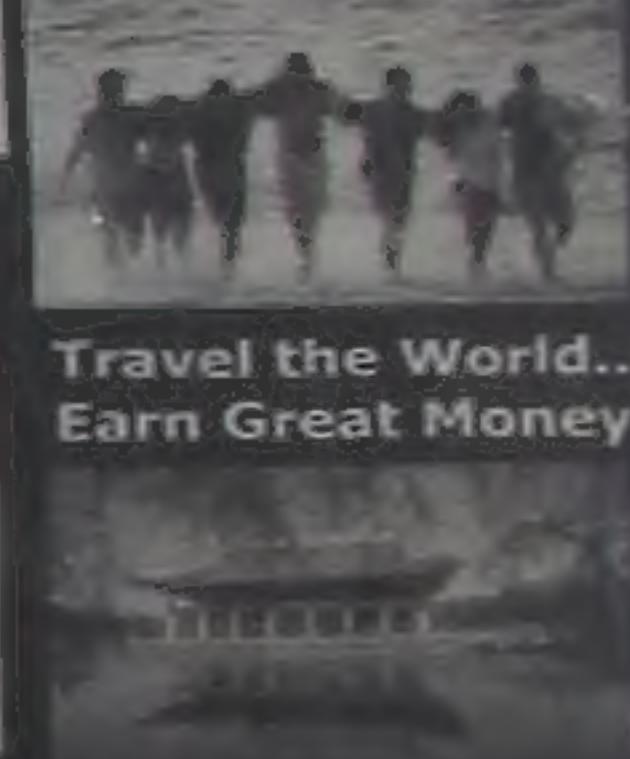
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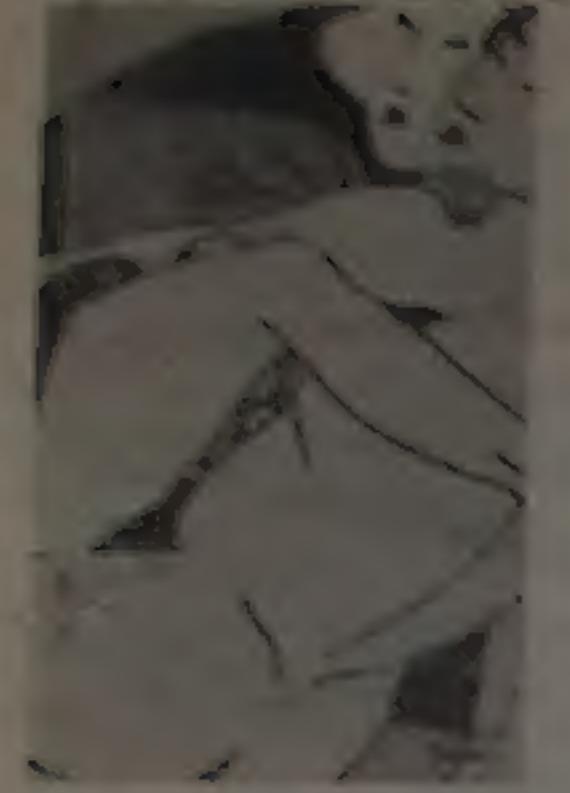
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alt sex column

BY ANDREA NEMERSON

Swallow the leader

Dear Andrea:

I want to try swallowing my husband's cum, but I have tasted the precum and didn't like it. I really want to do it! It's always been a fantasy of mine. I just don't know how I will feel when it happens. There was one time with my ex-boyfriend when his cum hit the roof of my mouth and I was like "Oh God!" and couldn't swallow! Also I have been getting my throat ready for deep throat. I can stick my whole vibrator down my throat but not without gagging. If I keep doing this won't my throat get used to something being in it?

Love, Reaching

Dear Reach:

Some people do train themselves out of gagging, but in your case it may not be necessary. If your fantasy was all about the swallowing, there's no need to go sticking vibrators down your throat—and speaking of which, that sounds unwholesome. What if it turned on down there? Your poor throat might never recover from the freakiness of the sensation. Most people use a dildo (a non-vibrating insertable sex thingy) or a hot

VUEWEEKLY

PICK ONE UP TODAY

dog or something. Anyway, deep-throating and swallowing are only tangentially related activities, connected chiefly by the fact that the further back the... deposit, the easier it may be to swallow. Deep throat fans usually suggest practising with your throat relaxed and extended, by the way, perhaps by lying on your back with your head tipped off the edge of the bed. This sounds hellish to me but is rumoured to work.

If you'd only told me about the (negative) "Oh God!" experience with the ex and hadn't mentioned the life-long fantasy part, I'd be advising you to shrug off the whole swallowing thing—people make too big a deal out of it, if you ask me—and go back to whatever you were doing before. If you really want it, though, I suggest having a good honest talk with hubby and extracting a serious promise that he will warn you before anything comes shooting your way. There are many places where sur-

Dear Stump:

Whatever for? Very few women actually care if you can penetrate their vaginas with your tongue—has anyone ever actually done this to, with or for your girlfriend, or is she just imagining that that's what's she'd like, based on poorly-written *Penthouse Forum* letters? When I used to read those as a kid, I always spotted the oral sex letters written by virgins on their parents' typewriters by the endless vaginal action and—oops!—no clitoris. Or, worse, "I stuck my tongue into her as far as it could go, until I reached her clitoris." So make sure she really even wants your tongue in there before you worry too much about surgery. If she really does have her heart set on some particular sensation, try a combination of tongue and well-lubed fingers and keep everything kind of wet and swirling around in there. That ought to do it.

This is a dangerous and delicate business—do not proceed without profes-

**Thick, gelatinous, odoriferous or highly-flavored semen
is... okay, never mind, now I'm making myself sick.**

prises are welcome, but the back of your throat is not one of them. Ask him not to drink coffee or smoke and to drink plenty of water too—at the risk of grossing you out to the point of swearing off both semen and alt.sex.column forever, thick, gelatinous, odoriferous or highly-flavored semen is... okay, never mind, now I'm making myself sick. But tell him that stuff, for me.

Love, Andrea

The pit and the frenulum

Dear Andrea:

(1) How dangerous is it to tamper with the frenulum? (2) Will having my frenulum cut or removed really extend my tongue that far? (3) Is there any way of controlling my tongue once the frenulum has been cut or removed? My girlfriend says that my tongue is nowhere near long enough to penetrate her vagina. As you can see I am desperate for ways to extend my tongue without putting myself at risk. Could you possibly recommend safer methods of tongue extension?

Love, Stumpy

sional help. Most reputable surgeons will not take a scalpel to the frenulum except in cases of bona fide tongue-tie, but a few will, if you look hard enough. Take Lizard Man, for instance. (No, really, take him.) He had his tongue bifurcated with an argon laser by a proper oral surgeon. He found him by calling around for doctors willing to perform voluntary adult frenectomies and taking it from there. I think this was my favorite line from his article on the Bodymod Extreme site (www.bmeworld.com; consider yourself warned): "There was minimal discomfort but I did get the interesting experience of smelling and tasting my own burning tongue. The nurse told me that many people find that Cherry Coke helps cut the taste, which I thought was amusing."

In short, you can find a doctor who will do it, and you will probably retain control of your tongue afterwards, but it's hardly worth the bother.

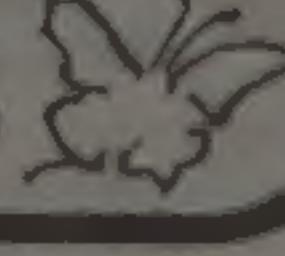
Love, Andrea

Andrea Nemerson writes and teaches in San Francisco. You can e-mail her a question at andrea@altsexcolumn.com.

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